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THE  
SPIRITUAL LIFE;

BY THE REV.

THOMAS GRIFFITH, A.M.

MINISTER OF RAM'S EPISCOPAL CHAPEL, HOMERTON.

*Eighth Edition.*

L O N D O N :

THOMAS HATCHARD, 187, PICCADILLY ;  
HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO., PATERNOSTER ROW.

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1856.

**LONDON :**

**Printed at the Operative Jewish Converts' Institution, Palestine Place  
Bethnal Green.**

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*1-11-1933*

## P R E F A C E.

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5-5-33 JMS  
It may conduce to the understanding of the following work to state that the subject is contemplated as forming that grand division of Christianity, the Experimental, to which its Doctrines are introductory, and of which its Duties are the practical result. The one theme of the Christian system is The Kingdom of Heaven. The leading idea of Christian Doctrine is the opening of this kingdom to all believers. The distinctive spirit of Christian Experience is a filial confidence of our election to this kingdom. 2 Thess. ii. 13—15. And the governing principle of Christian Practice is a corresponding zeal for the advancement in ourselves and others of that holiness by which alone this Kingdom can be ultimately reached. 2 Peter i. 10—12.

It is of the second of these particulars, the Distinctive spirit of Christianity, that the present work endeavours to treat. I know indeed the peculiar difficulty of the subject. I know how impossible it is to convey by words what by experience alone can be fully understood. Our inward feelings we can but imperfectly express. This expression, again, is still more imperfectly apprehended. And this apprehension, yet further, requires to be verified by the reader, for himself, by the reproduction in his own mind of those states of consciousness which the writer has but indicated rather than described. And thus a threefold difficulty is involved in the transmission of our sentiments on all those subjects which are neither scientific nor historical, but lie within the domain of taste and feeling, and address themselves to the heart rather than the head. Their intelligibility depends more upon the spirit of the reader than on the power of the writer. In a full-charged atmosphere, the smallest vibration will be heard. In a vacuum the largest bell is struck in vain.

And hence the deep importance of our bringing to all works of experimental religion a per-



sonal, self-questioning, and meditative interest. For what has been said of Virtue is equally true of Piety ; no man can teach it to another ; not by definition, argument, description, can it be communicated ; by sympathy alone can its independent life be stirred within the soul, and developed into vigour. Men can teach only what they *know*. What they *feel*, they must be satisfied with humbly telling forth in patient expectation, till the feeble breath of their experience have crept quietly along the chords of congenial minds, and one and another give back at its gentle touch a responsive sound.

Nor is such a personal interest and responsiveness less necessary to our *profiting* by devotional and practical subjects than to our apprehension of them. With the most accurate conceptions of religious truth we shall have but little spiritual growth, without that working out a subject in our own minds, and realizing in them the experiences of which we read, which meditation, self-examination, and prayer can alone produce. Each successive year will behold us only where we were. Our spiritual movement (for movement we may have) will be not progression, but oscillation. We shall only

swing round with the tide of other men's emotions, not stretch out in our proper course. Our very diligence will be only conservative, not constructive. We shall repair from time to time the imperfect structure which in the first fervour of Repentance we had hastily run up, but we shall not strengthen its foundations, nor enlarge its plan, nor adorn its front, nor build it up towards heaven.

May God sanctify this book to such an *Edification* of those who read it; that they, "building up themselves on their most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost, may keep themselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life!"

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## PART I.

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### THE ESSENCE

OF

### THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

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Though Christ be the *Head*, yet is the Holy Ghost the *Heart* of the Church, from whence the vital spirits of grace and holiness are issued out, unto the quickening of the body mystical.

HEYLYN.

In the powers and faculties of our souls God requireth the uttermost which our unfeigned affection toward him is able to yield ; so that if we affect him not far above and before all things, our religion hath not that inward perfection which it should have, neither do we indeed worship him as our God.

HOOKEE.

As divine *knowledge* begets *affection*, so this affection will bring forth *action*, real obedience. For these three are inseparably linked, and each dependent on, and the product of, one another. The affection is not blind but flowing from knowledge ; nor actual obedience constrained, but flowing from affection ; and the affection is not idle, seeing it brings forth obedience, nor knowledge dead, seeing it begets affection.

LEIGHTON ON 1 PETER IV. 2.

## PART I.

### THE ESSENCE OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.



#### CHAPTER I.

##### PIETY IN GENERAL.

WE can never remind ourselves too often of the fact that Christianity is a remedy for human need ; that its leading Idea is Deliverance from all the ills of a groaning world, and its distinctive proclamation is peace ;—peace to them that are near and to them that are afar off. This grand characteristic is beautifully exhibited in the very title which is given to it in the Irish tongue, in which our term “The Gospel” is translated “The Story of Peace ;” and it is touchingly expressed by St. Augustine when he says, “In Cicero and Plato I meet with many things wisely said, and things that have a manifest tendency to move the passions, but in none of them do I find these words, ‘Come unto me all ye that

are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

But the ills of man are various, and as various therefore are the consolations and the helps which the Gospel of Deliverance from those ills proclaims. Are we *sensitive* beings, and therefore wounded in every nerve by the physical evil which overspreads the earth? The Gospel tells us of a time when all tears shall be wiped from every eye, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Are we *moral* beings, and therefore shocked and humbled by the degradation and self-contradiction which we witness in ourselves and in mankind at large? The Gospel brings that healing medicine which can both soothe the diseased spirit and restore it ultimately to perfect health. And are we *religious* beings, formed to recognize a relation of ourselves and of the world to an unseen Creator and Governor, and therefore pained to see how little this relation is remembered, nay, how much that remembrance is shrunk from and opposed? The Gospel cheers us by unveiling our Heavenly Father now to the eye of faith, and promising that he shall hereafter break forth in unshrouded glory over all the earth. Only let us learn to know ourselves, and estimate aright the actual condition of mankind, and the remedy which that condition calls for; so shall we appreciate the worth of the Revelation

which is the counterpart to that condition, the disclosure of that remedy, the answer to that call.

And in the same proportion also shall we be led to understand the *nature* of the help which Christianity supplies, and shall be convinced that even as our disease is *personal and moral*, so must the remedy revealed be equally *personal and moral*. The truths of the Gospel become *saving*,—that is, effectual to deliver us from the state in which they find us,—only as they are brought to bear upon ourselves. The seed is given indeed from Heaven, but it is only as it takes root in the heart of man and springs up in his character, that it can expand into everlasting life.

And hence the infinite importance of personal Piety, as that without which all knowledge of Christian truth and all attempt at Christian duty will be ineffectual. There are indeed three grand classes of religious meditation;—the meditation, namely, on what has been done *for us*, what must be done *in us*, and what should be done *by us*; and these classes may be verbally distinguished into Doctrinal Experimental and Practical; but they are inseparable in fact; for all true doctrine experience and practice are one and indivisible. And the connecting link, say rather the assimilating life, which effects this unity, resides in the middle term—the *experience of what must be done in us*.

Only personal piety, (and by the word experience we mean personal piety in all its parts,) brings down general Doctrine into individual application, and quickens notions into principles. And only personal piety can supply the life the feeling and the energy, by which consistent Practice can be either fully purposed or successfully pursued.

How solemn therefore is the subject to which I would direct the attention of my reader in this book, and in the prosecution of which I would entreat the active co-operation of his own mind ! Suffer me to begin and carry it on throughout with direct appeals to your personal sympathy. Join with me in frequent ejaculations for divine help and blessing. The topic is, beyond all others, devout and practical. Devoutly and practically let us enter on it. It concerns the *soul* of him who writes and him who reads. It can be realized only in and by our *souls*. Spiritual *truth* is but the seed of spiritual *life*. And though spiritual truth may be dropped into the mind by instruction from without us, spiritual *life* can be awakened only by an energy within us : by our meditating on the truths declared ; by our applying them to our particular state of heart ; by our brooding over them in our inmost soul ; above all by prayerful seeking of the *Spirit* of life—which is the Spirit of God—to come and quicken them by warmth from heaven. O thou Lord and Giver of life, who art the

Author of all godliness, vouchsafe thy presence and thy blessing to our united meditations! Grant that he who writes and he who reads may feel the power of the truths which we consider in common! Grant that what issues from the heart may fructify the heart, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together!

Our first endeavour must be to attain a full perception of what we mean by Personal Piety, and therefore our First Part will enquire into THE ESSENCE OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE. And then, since this life is a subject of inward experience, and reveals itself in the consciousness by gradual manifestations, our Second Part will trace THE PROCESS OF ITS DEVELOPMENT. And further, since like all life it requires sustenance and is capable of increase and invigoration, our Third Part will indicate some of the principal MEANS ON WHICH DEPEND ITS NOURISHMENT AND GROWTH.

And now then, in this First Part we address ourselves to the inquiry, What is THE ESSENCE OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE?

We cannot meditate on the examples of pious men without perceiving in them one condition of mind which specially characterizes all God's children, and marks them for his own. It forms the

family likeness by which they are distinguished, the common temper which, amidst every variety of feature, makes them in kind the same. By this, every servant of God in every age is assimilated to the whole body of the faithful; and it is because we sympathize with this, that a Noah, an Abraham, a David, an Isaiah, a Daniel, a Paul, widely different as they are in other respects, are felt to be our brethren; and their writings touch the deepest and most secret springs of our nature, and express in words more apt than we ourselves can form the most intimate workings of our hearts.

This common temper is expressed in Scripture by various terms. Sometimes it is called "the fear of God"—the bowing of the soul before invisible Authority. Sometimes, "the walking before God"—the having reference to his guidance in all our steps. Sometimes it is termed "Godliness"—the feeling that in God we live and move and have our being; and "Devoutness"—the assiduous care\* to cultivate his favour, and honour Him

\* *Εὐλάβεια*. See Luke ii. 25. A feature well expressed in Ps. cxix. 3, 4, New Version :

"Such men their *utmost caution* use,  
To shun each wicked deed;  
And in the path which he directs,  
With *constant care* proceed."



in all our ways. Sometimes again, it is called "the living to God"—the regulating our spirit and conduct with reference to his will. And still further, to express the freeness and spontaneousness of this life—its welling forth from the hidden fountain of the heart as the unbidden outflow of an inward feeling—it is specially denominated "the love of God."

In all which Scripture terms we cannot but observe one idea invariably recurring amidst the various shades of meaning, and forming therefore the common mark of Personal Piety,—the direction, namely, of the mind and heart *towards God*; the turning to Him as the centre of our being, and of the sphere in which we live. The spiritual life is emphatically a life *in God*—flowing from Him as its source, and ever pressing upwards towards Him as its natural level.

Such a life then is evidently distinct from, and over and above, the *Knowledge* merely of *doctrinal truths*. For such knowledge, though essential to the purifying and the regulation of piety can by no means produce that piety, nor does its presence determine the degree in which that piety may exist. Very often is there manifested a deep devoutness even in the mere twilight of religious knowledge—a devoutness which we should do well to cherish the more sedulously as that twilight brightens into

broader day. For it will profit us little to enjoy the blaze of noon-tide illumination, if we have lost therein that thrilling awe of the Unseen which in the dim religious light of earlier consciousness stole over us. To preserve the fresh and simple feelings of the child in union with the matured experience and attainments of the man is the perfection of the human character. And to be ever children in spirit while in understanding we are men is the perfection of religion. But alas, this union is not necessarily maintained, nor do these elements expand invariably in proportion to each other. We may see on the contrary in many instances—we may feel in ourselves—a growing insight into Christian doctrine, correction of early errors, acquaintance with new truths or with more of the detail and connexion of old ones, and increasing clearness and harmony of Theological system ; and yet Piety, so far from growing in proportion to all this, not perhaps growing at all ; nay, withering under the glare of this intenser light ;—the old simplicity of heart gone ; the old earnestness of spirit dead ; the fulness of the soul dried up ; the liquid dew and bloom of youthful feeling brushed away ; and the life of our religion checked and fixed, if not destroyed. Reader, I entreat you, seek knowledge indeed ; cultivate a just and rational Theology ; endeavour to attain increasing insight

into religious truth ; but let all your knowledge be accompanied be guarded be impregnated and quickened, by a living and life-giving Piety !

But this spiritual life is not less distinct from, and over and above, the *Practice* merely of *moral duties*. For here again, though pious feeling without holy practice is but a delusion of the stimulated sensibility, a product of the animal and not the spiritual life ; yet there may be much of outward practice, “ works ” of every kind, the bustle of an active and a showy doing, and yet no experience—or no *proportionate* experience—of that inward spirit which supplies the proper motive of all true moral and religious observance. It is true indeed—it is never to be forgotten by us—that by our fruits we must be known ; by the practical results of knowledge and feeling in the daily conduct must our character be estimated both by ourselves and by the world. But then, equally true is it, and equally to be remembered, that not our separate acts nor any series of acts, considered in themselves alone, but the general motives out of which all particular doings spring, and the pervading spirit which determines and characterizes our habits, constitute the true and only moral worth of man. And when we see how almost every act and course of conduct may be the fruit of contrary principles and imbued with contrary feelings,—the

most dissimilar causes producing often the most similar effects,—we must acknowledge how very insufficient works are by themselves as proofs of piety; and how distinct from works is that devoutness which will nevertheless impel the heart to their performance. O let not the man who finds himself (or *thinks* he finds himself, for we too easily satisfy our conscience in these matters) fulfilling many of the duties of his station, attending to the interests of his family, maintaining a good name in his business and his social circle, “doing as he would be done by,” nay, adding to all this a recognition of the claims of religion and an attendance on its public services,—let not such a man imagine that he has *therefore, necessarily*, that inward piety which constitutes the spiritual life. Let him not be satisfied with what he may denominate effects, though all unconscious of the feelings which *should* be their cause. For piety is not some secret essence, the imagined base of sensible phenomena while itself insensible; it is itself also a phenomenon, with marks and evidences of its own. It is ever found indeed in intimate connexion with external duties, but it must neither be confounded with them nor resolved into them.

And this caution and distinction must be extended even to specifically *religious* works—works done avowedly for God, and in his cause; works

of Christian charity and zeal ; the supporting of religious societies, the distribution of religious books, the communication of religious instruction, the attending of religious meetings. All these things may be done, and yet they are not the measure of our piety ; nay rather they too often defraud and starve that deeper life within us. Our inward spirituality may be decaying while our outward activity becomes the admiration of our fellow men,—or of ourselves. The breathings of the spirit may be few and languid, while the pulsations of the animal life may be strong and frequent. We may be giving out supplies to men, but not drawing in supplies from God. Let us not forget these truths in this day of enlarged activity. Let us pause frequently amidst the whirl of the machinery by which we are surrounded. Let us watch the *spirit* of our minds—their bent and bias, their private aspirations, their deeper and more delicate breathings—that our exertions may not be superficial or partial, the product of external stimulants alone ; but flowing out of an interior life pervading equally and simultaneously all the powers of our moral being.

But let me not be mistaken here. Let me not be supposed while indicating the distinction which seems to me to exist between Piety and the Knowledge of Doctrine on the one hand, and the Prac-

tice of Duty on the other, to concede for a moment that these several elements can be totally *separated*, or that a genuine piety can exist without some Knowledge to inform, and some Practice to express its presence. There is indeed a feeling but too frequently exhibited, which seems to bear some marks of true devoutness, and yet can co-exist with both the grossest superstition and the idlest self-indulgence. But this feeling lies no deeper than the nervous system, and is no more than a general susceptibility for the mysterious and the awful, without that intelligent and moral recognition of superior *authority* as well as might, of *holiness* as well as love, which alone gives the thought of God an influence on the heart and life. "Religion, in Italy," says Shelley, "is interwoven with the whole fabric of life. It is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind admiration,—*not a rule for moral conduct*. It has no necessary connexion with any one virtue. It pervades intensely the whole frame of society, and is according to the temper of the mind which it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse, a refuge,—*never a check*." And O that such were not sometimes too much the character of religion in England! Do we not too often see some approximation at least to this awful delusion? Do we not meet with sensitive natures susceptible of

deep impression from divine things, penetrated with the grandeur the beauty and the interest of religion, rapt into a reverie of adoration, and willing to dissolve themselves away in contemplative emotion; but when the call for Practice comes, the demand for solid sober resolute continuous struggling with difficulty, and schooling of the heart, and toiling up the steep of moral excellence, "immediately they are offended;"—they stumble at the obstacles opposed to them. Nay, they will not only shrink from Practice, but will denounce on principle the efforts it requires. They canonize their sensations as the whole of piety. They cry down painful duties as works of supererogation and self-righteousness. They fall languidly into the arms of an enervating Theology, and excuse their indolence under the name of spirituality, and their inconsistency by querulous bemoanings of indwelling sin. And then come the reveries of quietism, a passive yielding to the stream of outward circumstances and the humors of the animal sensibility, an alternation of religious ague-fits, and in the end a mere voluptuous selfishness.

Piety then, is neither Knowledge merely of doctrinal truth, nor Practice merely of moral duty; yet still less is it a blind, immoral *Sensibility*. This latter it excludes as spurious, while the former it accompanies as their sanctifier and their friend;

breathes over them a heavenly fragrance; infuses into them spiritual life; communicates to them a geniality an earnestness a glow of holiest feeling; and consecrates them to God. For piety is *the sense of God*—of his presence his authority his love,—pervading and ennobling the whole soul. It is the reference to Him of all we know, and the doing for Him of all we do. It is the holding his *idea* in our mind, as the central light in which alone all other objects can be truly seen and fitly estimated. It is the enshrining his *character* in our heart, as the model of all excellence, the object of all admiration and affection and devotedness. And it is the enthroning his *authority* in our will, as the Observer the Ruler and the Judge of all our purposes.

And O the blessedness of such a sense of God! the peace that passeth understanding which results from referring all things to God, leaving all things with God, enjoying all things in God, communing with God, leaning upon God, feeling underneath us the everlasting arms of God! It is this which makes all Nature History and Mind, full of life, and instinct with Deity—"Him first, him midst, him last, and without end;"—which assures us, not only that there is a God, (a cold, inoperative thought, a speculation merely,) but that this God is present in and with his works, so



that not one of the phenomena of nature, nor of the events of life, nor of the workings of the mind, but pre-suppose and point to Him, as the cause of all causation, the law-giver of all law, the prime-mover of all movement, the life of all life.

Do we look at the very simplest causes manifested in the sphere of *nature*; or make our way through all the combinations of a complicated system; or ascend from one step to another through a long series of results till we arrive at general or apparently ultimate laws?—still, in the centre of all this complication and as the law of these laws, the devout man ever recognizes God.

Or do we turn to the manifold perplexed *events* of human life,—the fortunes of individuals, the revolutions of society, the rise and fall of kingdoms, the whole mysterious story of the world? Here equally does piety behold a present God. Not merely in single strange events, where only one immediate step is traceable from the visible effect to the invisible cause, but in every circumstance and every long and twisted chain of circumstances, where the instruments are more numerous and evident, and where from being able to account for much, men cheat themselves with the assumption that they have accounted for all. For the pious man knows that to God nothing is little because nothing is great, nothing is trivial

because nothing is strange : and he therefore recognizes His hand as readily and adores it as profoundly in the most ordinary occurrences of life, as do the ignorant and the earthly-minded in the most miraculous.

And not less in the workings of the human *mind*,—the conclusions of the understanding, the intuitions of the reason, the determinations of the will, the whole formation of the spirit from earliest infancy to any given moment of its being,—the devout man recognizes God. Be his thoughts and their connexion traceable or be they not ; can he refer to the origin of his conceptions and the ground of his decisions or can he not ; this at least he can refer to as the source of all that bears the stamp of good within him,—God. God, by whose power he was made and is sustained, in whose world he lives, by whose creatures he is acted on, by whose Spirit he is illuminated comforted and strengthened, and who “worketh in him both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.” O the wondrous presence of God in all things, and of all things to God ! O the mysterious breathing of his Spirit through the universe, quickening sustaining informing actuating the stupendous whole !

“ Surrounded by His power, we stand,  
On every side we feel his hand ;  
O skill for human reach too high,  
Too dazzling bright for mortal eye ! ”

O thou Father of our spirits, by whose inspiration only we can know and love thee, draw us by these meditations to thyself! wake up the diviner particle within our souls; arouse the slumbering chords of piety in our hearts; and sweep across them by thy powerful yet gentle Spirit till they thrill in trembling sympathy, responsive to thy touch and vocal in thy praise!

## CHAPTER II.

## CHRISTIAN PIETY.

PIETY, we have seen, is the sense of God : the feeling of the absolute dependence of ourselves and of the universe on unseen Power and Authority ;

“ A sense o’er all the soul imprest  
That we are weak, but not unblest,  
Since in us, round us, everywhere,  
Eternal strength and wisdom are.”\*

But in calling this experience a “sense,” and a “feeling,” it must be remembered that we mean thereby a state of mind essentially different from the impulses of sensation and the passing humours of sensibility ; a state analogous to that which we experience in contemplating the true the noble the beautiful and the good, wherein the soul is elevated above itself, absorbed in the objects which attract its gaze, and roused from the cool collectedness of mere observation into the earnestness of personal interest.

\* Coleridge.

Yet this very feeling of *personal interest* in the idea of God, this very sense of a relation of that God to us and our well-being, which constitutes the life of Piety, must bring with it an awe, a shrinking of the mind before superior might, in proportion as we feel the greatness of the Being with whom we have to do. The same works and ways which excite in us veneration of a supreme Creator and Ordainer, humble us at the same time with the painful sense of our own exceeding littleness. As our conception of God expands, our conception of man contracts. The higher we lift our eyes towards heaven the lower we sink in our own esteem. And Veneration therefore, by itself alone, takes the form of dread. Piety manifests itself as superstition. The sense of God lies like a heavy weight upon the soul, and crushes it down into abjectness. If we regard ourselves as only parts—and most insignificant parts—of the vast creation which he grasps within the hollow of his hand; as portions of that endless chain of which each link is reciprocally cause and effect, effect and cause; as fleeting beings of a day, tossed for a few short moments to the surface of a troubled ocean and then absorbed again into its bosom, the creatures of necessity, the sport of fate;—then the more we recognize the might which compresses us, the impulse which sweeps us onward, the irresistible energy

which seems to dash the several elements of being one against another, the more does our sense of dependence become oppressive, and we crouch before the Invisible as a captive before his conqueror, a slave before his master. Hence the costly expiations by which the terrified savage endeavours to propitiate the spirit of the storm ; each demon of the various ills in which he is involved. Hence the trembling awe with which the more enlightened Greek contemplated the march of all-subduing Fate and whispered to himself, " O never may my will be brought into collision with His stern decrees ! " \* Hence the " fear which hath torment " into which even the mind of Job began to sink when he mused on his calamities and exclaimed, " He breaketh me with a tempest, he multiplieth my wounds without cause ; let him take his rod away from me and let not his fear terrify me. Is it good to thee that thou shouldst oppress, that thou shouldst despise the work of thine hands ? " And hence, " the spirit of bondage " which made the Israelites " remove and stand far off from God," and cry to Moses, " Speak thou with us and we will hear ; but let not God speak with us lest we die." When we bring together in our mind the greatness of God and the littleness of man, we feel that we must be

\* *Æsch* : *Prometh.* 535.

at an immeasurable distance from him ; that there can be no communion no friendship no affinity between the strong and the feeble ; the Everlasting and the momentary ; the tremendous Creator and the abject creature. "The consideration of nature," says Neander in his History of the Church, "raised indeed in the minds of thinking men the dim suspicion of an infinite and Almighty Spirit, not to be judged of by the limits of the human understanding. But this sense of Deity did not strengthen elevate or animate their minds but rather abased and prostrated them, for there was involved in it the accompanying sense of their own littleness and nothingness, and they knew no mediating truth by which these two conflicting feelings might be reconciled and held together in peace. They saw nothing but the gulf which stretched between the finite and the Infinite, the mortal and the Immortal, the Almighty and the impotent ; and they knew no means by which that gulf might be filled up. The God whom they imagined to themselves was only a being elevated infinitely above degraded man, not a being related to him, inviting him to his bosom, nay stooping condescendingly to his infirmities. Only the Majesty, not the sanctity, nor the Love of God, filled their souls."

Some other element therefore, besides the fear of God's authority and the recognition of his ever-present working, is essential to a healthy piety. The sense not only of dependence and subjection, but of affinity and friendship; the spirit not of a slave, but of a child; the recognition not of one who *looks on* merely, on the doings of a stranger, but who communes with and enters into the mind and purpose of a friend. We must know God not as our Creator only and our Governor, but as our Father; not as above us only, but within us; as connected with us, not merely as he is connected with unconscious matter or unreasoning life, but even as a parent with his offspring, as mind with mind and soul with soul.

And this is just that other element of Piety which revelation supplies, and which Christianity makes predominant in the heart. The Scripture doctrine of the origin the nature and the destiny of man, and the Scripture promises of the spirit which the Gospel shall infuse into him, exactly meet the difficulty, answer the demand, and do away the terrors, of natural Piety. They afford the supplement it needs; the reconciling truth, the animating assurance, the new-creating life, which tempers veneration with love, abasement with elevation, and sacred awe with filial confidence. Him whom we ignorantly worship they declare to us.



God that made the world and all things therein, they proclaim to be not far from every one of us, for we are his offspring.

For it is carefully to be noted that the Scripture doctrine concerning man takes him out of the mechanism of material things, and elevates him far above the rank of a mere animal being into that of a son of God. All things were made *by* God ; but man, we are told by revelation, was made, moreover, *like* God. All other living creatures the earth brought forth at God's command, but concerning man He said, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness;" and though his body was formed of the dust of the ground, yet his soul was breathed into him by the Spirit of God. "The Spirit of God," says Job, "hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." "The dust indeed," says Solomon, "shall return to the earth as it was ; but the spirit shall return to God who gave it." "He," says St. Paul, "is the Father of spirits." And it is the great object of that Apostle in his address to the Athenians, to raise their minds above the grossness of idolatry by reminding them that God was to be found, not around them and above them only, but within them, in their own souls ; "for in him we live and move and have our being, and we are all his offspring,"—of his race, bearing affinity

to him so as no material things can do, partakers of his spirituality and the image of his eternity. Which truth is expressed by St. Luke when he calls Adam "the son of God;" and is constantly brought before us by our Lord, by the favourite appellation which he uses and encourages his followers to use for God; "your Father,"—"your heavenly Father."

In the consciousness then, of this relationship to God—the assurance that we are not mere insects of a moment, and of the race of earth alone, but members of that whole family in heaven and earth which constitutes the intellectual sphere in which the Father of spirits dwells,—in this assurance, and in the elevation of mind the expansion of heart the energy of will which it inspires, consists the proper piety of man; that piety which *connects* us in heart and will with Him whom we adore, and has its conversation in heaven as its home, and brings us to dwell in God and God in us. With this Adam was created, and this he enjoyed when God communed with him in the holy garden, and the divine wisdom rejoiced in the habitable part of the earth and her delights were with the sons of men. And this, Jesus the second Adam exhibited in all its quiet grandeur, when he walked in uninterrupted communion with his Father, and the angels of God ascended and descended upon the Son

of man, and though he had come down from heaven he was still "in heaven," speaking and acting not of himself but by the Father that dwelt in him, and being "not alone, because the Father was with him."

But in Adam from the moment of his fall, and in every child of Adam naturally born of him, this blessed consciousness of relationship to God has been destroyed. Brought under the dominion of sense, the life of the spirit is smothered. Entering into connexion with the evil one, the connexion with God is broken off. A sense of distance alienation strangeness, has taken the place of filial confidence ; and that bodily expulsion from the garden of God's presence is but a type of the estrangement of mind and separation of heart from God, in which man now is born and lives—and *dies*, except there come upon him new life from above, a new infusion of the Spirit that he has lost. The knowledge of God is no longer the love of God ; the recognition of his presence is not naturally delight in that presence ; the sense of our relation to Him as his creatures, is not the sense of union and communion with Him as his children. Born of the flesh, we are flesh ; children of this world, we have no taste for a higher ; familiar but too soon with sin, and weighed down with a consciousness of guilt, we

shrink from contact with the Holy One and dare not draw near to the Just One.

And therefore now, true filial Piety is not of spontaneous growth in man, will not develop itself by the natural expansion of the mind. The principle of it is effete, and must again be quickened from above. We must be born of the Spirit before we can become spirit. We must be invited encouraged drawn by God, before we shall regard him as our Father and return to his bosom. The *necessity* for union with him still exists. The want of that union is the cause of that aching void and restless craving which all men feel they know not why; for none but God can fill the soul of man. But the full consciousness of this want, the knowledge of the means by which it may be supplied, even the desire itself for that supply, these must come from God. And to produce these He has revealed himself. He has broken the awful silence in which he stands wrapped up in nature. He has condescended to explain himself in *words* of truth and love, by the patriarchs by Moses by the prophets by his own beloved Son. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past to our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son." The intercourse which sin had interrupted has been gradually renewed. Heaven

has been opened. The Spirit of God has descended. The soul of man has been raised towards him from whom it sprang. Ideas of heavenly origin have been infused into him, and they have borne him upwards towards their native sphere ; feelings and purposes have been awakened

— “ Whose very sweetness yieldeth proof  
That they were born for immortality.”

O the wondrous condescension of our Father,—to come down to us in our low estate, to seek us in our banishment, to knit again the links which we had rudely burst asunder ; to “ speak unto us, rising up early and speaking ;” to “ send to us all his servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, though we hearkened not unto his voice ;” and then to manifest himself in all his fulness in the person of his own beloved Son, that “ as many as received him may have privilege to become the sons of God,” and “ whosoever loveth the Son and keepeth his words the Father may love him and come to him and make his abode with him !” This is the consummation which was predicted by the prophets, announced by John the Baptist as the special benefit of Christianity, promised by Jesus as the consequence of his exaltation, and actually bestowed by him on his disciples as the seed of eternal life and the earnest of the inheritance of

the saints in light. The Spirit of God creates us again after the divine image and makes us partakers of the divine nature, and breathes and stirs in us as the Spirit of filial piety,—the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba Father,—this Spirit himself bearing witness with our Spirit that we are the children of God, and if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ!

Reader, let me ask you, do you feel your need of this re-union with the Father of your spirit? Are you led by all the outward manifestations of his power and his kindness to seek the Lord if haply you may feel after him and find him, *there* whence he is not far off, within yourselves? Do you feel that the human heart was made for God, and cannot be in peace till it has become acquainted with him, and yielded up to him its trust its love its tenderest devotion? Then you will be prepared to trace with me the gracious promises which he has given of this inward life, the method of its development, the means of its nourishment and growth, till you exclaim with David in the experience of its actual possession, “Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee! My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever!”

## CHAPTER III.

## THE MANIFESTATIONS OF CHRISTIAN PIETY.

WE have seen that the inward life of Piety finds its due development only in the form of filial confidence towards God, and that this filial confidence is the product of that revelation of his character and infusion of his Spirit into the heart, which Christianity—and Christianity alone—affords. For, as the leading Idea of Christianity, as indicated by its one specific term “The Gospel,” is the proclamation of inheritance in the kingdom of God; so the distinctive Benefit of Christianity, which by that proclamation it produces in the heart of its recipients, is similarly indicated by one specific term “The Spirit;” the communication of that filial disposition towards God, which is at once the indispensable qualification for that inheritance and the certain pledge of its ultimate possession. This is that “promise of the Father,” that gift of God, which the prophets predicted, and the Baptist pointed to, and Jesus actually conferred on his disciples, as the seal of their adoption, the earnest of

their inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession. And it is important, therefore, to consider some of the Scripture declarations concerning this gift, that we may learn both how uniformly it is marked out as the special privilege of Christianity, and what are the chief manifestations of its presence in the heart.

And here we must begin with the predictions of the Old Testament Prophets. For all the revelations of God are closely connected with each other, and no one of them therefore can be fully understood without reference to the rest. Judaism can be rightly estimated only when viewed as anticipative of Christianity, and Christianity has no meaning but as the product and consummation of Judaism. The Old Testament and the New are but different chapters in the one book of God, and in the former do we find the seeds of those divine ideas which in the latter are developed into full expansion. "I am not come," said Jesus, "to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfil them."

Turning then in the first place to the prophet Isaiah, we shall find him, in the 44th chapter of his book, preaching as the special blessing which God designed to bestow upon his people in the times of the Messiah, the outpouring of his Spirit. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty," he declares in verses 3—5, "and floods upon the dry



ground ; I will pour MY SPIRIT upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring ; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say I am the Lord's ; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob ; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." Where you observe, first, that the particular character under which the Spirit is promised, is that of refreshment and new life. As the rain upon the parched ground, which makes all things spring up as it were from death, so is the Spirit of God to the heart of man ; the source of vital energy ; "the Lord and Giver of life," as the Nicene Creed denominates him. In proportion as his influences are restrained all things languish ; in proportion as they are again poured forth all things are revived and germinate and blossom into beauty. Which germinating of the heart, you will observe secondly, is placed in the development of moral affections towards God. "One shall say, I am the Lord's—and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord ;"—the first manifestation of spiritual life shall be *self-consecration and devotedness to God*.

And this characteristic of inward life is still more fully exhibited in a further prediction of the Spirit, which is given by Ezekiel in his 36th chap-

ter, verses 23—27. For therein God promises, in connexion with his pardoning compassion and recovery of his people, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you an heart of flesh; and I will put MY SPIRIT within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and keep my judgments and do them." Where you perceive that the Spirit of God is promised as something altogether "new," and different from that which hitherto had actuated the Jews, impelling them to love and keep those laws which they had hitherto so uniformly broken. It is the spirit of a child tenderly susceptible of his Father's influence and sensitive to his opinion (instead of hardening himself against it), and voluntarily walking in the path which he points out. God's law taken up into the heart, his will made our own, and animating and directing all we think and do.

But next, the Spirit is promised by the Prophets as the source of intimate *communion and intercourse with God*. This characteristic is distinctly commemorated by the Prophet Joel (ii. 28, 29) as the special privilege of the times of the Messiah. "It shall come to pass afterward," (that is, in the last days, the days of the Christ,) "that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit." Where the essence of the promise is the same with those in Isaiah and Ezekiel, but the characteristic of *inward spiritual life* is more strongly marked by reference to what had hitherto constituted the privilege of a peculiar class of men. In those days, says Joel, not the prophetic class alone, not persons of any one particular rank or sex or age, but *all* shall prophesy—that is, shall have the spirit of a Prophet, the spirit of Wisdom Piety and Zeal for God. Just as Isaiah had proclaimed of these same times: "*All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children.*" And Jeremiah more diffusely: "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts, and will be their God and they shall be my people, and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall *all* know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them saith the Lord." All that insight into God's truth, and acquaintance with his will, and communion with his Spirit, which has been hitherto vouchsafed, and that by measure only and occasionally, to some few favoured men by dreams and visions, shall then be diffused copiously and

continuously by the teaching and the influences of a common Spirit, through all the people of God. The inward judgment shall direct, the inward conscience shall control, the inward life of communion with the Father shall animate and strengthen. They shall have fulfilled in them the generous wish of Moses, "Would God that *all* the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them." They shall possess what St. John describes as actually enjoyed by those to whom he writes, "an unction from the Holy One, and know all things; and the anointing which they receive of Him shall abide in them, and they need not that any man should teach them, but as *the same anointing* teacheth them of all things, and is truth and is no lie, they shall abide in Him." This is the Spirit which is predicted by the Prophets as the glory of the Gospel times, and which the Christian therefore is to seek for and to cultivate as his special privilege;—*the Spirit of intercourse with God*. That state of mind which rises above the world, not that it may disdainfully spurn that world away as unworthy of its care, but that it may inhale from the purer atmosphere into which it soars, all the wisdom energy and courage which may enable it to act the most effectually with and for that world. That spirit which is fruitful in all holy cogitations and majestic purposes; which views all

things round us with serenity and hopefulness because it views them in God ; and which works on all things round us with patience and efficiency because it works by God. That far-seeing glance into futurity, that calm anticipation of success, that quiet consciousness of heavenly strength, which makes us ever earnest but never anxious ; ever diligent but never bustling ; ever vigorous but never violent ; ever bold but never rash ; ever strenuous for God but never exhausted and convulsed by overstrained endeavour. O for this quiet, yet all-powerful life within our souls ! O for the breath of God diffused through every faculty, and his " saving health " reanimating every power, that we may live in the Spirit, be led by the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, be strengthened with all might by the Spirit in the inner man !

But if we go on now to the New Testament, we find John the Baptist promising this Spirit, farther, as the source of *Peace and Joy in God*. The penitents who come to him confessing their sins he cheers with the assurance of a blessing far superior to anything that he can give them. " I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose ; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Where observe the contrast which the Baptist intimates between the baptism of Repentance which he administered, and the baptism of

the Spirit which it was the prerogative of the Christ alone to vouchsafe. Repentance is negative. The Holy Ghost is positive. The one is the renunciation of evil ; the other the attainment of good. The one breaks off friendship and communion with the world ; the other realizes friendship and communion with God. The one is a spirit of sorrow and self-reproach ; the other is a spirit of confidence and peace. The one struggles up towards God ; the other walks along with God. The one is as the crisis of our spiritual disease, an anxious moment of revulsion and of effort ; the other is the restoration to spiritual health, when the blessed air of heaven plays upon the soul, and there is felt a buoyancy a lightness a balanced harmony of conscious blessedness which none can understand but those who feel it, and none can tell or can convey to others even when they feel. Then does the spirit begin to breathe. Then do the shackles of the sense relax themselves, and the iron band which had so long repressed the aspirations of the soul towards God is burst asunder, and a stream of new affections gushes forth, and the light of heaven plays upon it, and it sparkles under the approving glance of God, and it spreads through every thought, and refreshes into joyfulness and beauty every region of the soul. " He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him," says our

Lord, "shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." "He that believeth on me," he says again, "from his belly"—i. e. from within himself, not from outward sources which may be soon dried up, but from the living spring which shall be unlocked within his soul (as Solomon means when he declares, 'the good man shall be satisfied from himself')—"there shall flow out rivers of living water." "And this," says St. John, "spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive."

Have *you* this Spirit, Christian Reader? Is this the characteristic of your Piety? Have you got beyond the fitful alternations, the painful struggles, the remorseful anguish, the "fear which hath torment" of an always renewing but never perfected Repentance, of a conscience too enlightened to slumber yet too irresolute to spring up for God, into that "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," which Christ came into the world and died and rose again and ascended up to heaven to procure and to communicate to miserable man? Are you still groping amidst the chilling mists that brood over the valley of humiliation (which truly is the valley of the shadow of death) or have you reached the open heights of faith, and emerged into the light

and life of the Divine favour as it shines forth in the face of Jesus Christ? These are no unimportant questions. They affect not our comfort merely. They affect the very essence of our piety ; our growth in holiness ; our usefulness among our fellow-men ; our power to glorify our Father and to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Religion without this baptism of the Holy Ghost is but the terrific gloom of superstition. It is at best but the trembling awe of Judaism. It is but the tempest and the whirlwind and the blackness and the flame ;—we need the calm outshining of the sun upon the desolated scene, illuminating all things with a tranquil radiance. It is but the strong wind and the earthquake and the fire, which awake and make attent the awe-struck spirit ;—we need the still small voice of friendly communing with God. O God grant us to derive from Christianity all it can convey ! To receive from Jesus all he was exalted to bestow ! Grant that we may be “filled with the Spirit, speaking to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts unto the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ !”

For thus shall we experience this same Spirit of devotedness to God—and intercourse with God—



and peace with God—to be moreover a Spirit of *power for God*. For the Spirit of God has for its emblem not water only which refreshes, but fire which inflames. An emblem which has ever been a favourite one in every language to express that inward ardour of mind which cannot be restrained, but bursts forth into fervent words and deeds. Thus we find it used in one author to denote the energy of genius; “He was all spirit, all fire,”—in another, that of poetic impulse;—“Thou canst not be idle if thou wouldst; thy noble qualities are like a fire burning within, and compel thee to pour thyself out in music and in song.” And in Scripture it expresses both (generally) any strong emotion; as in Luke xxiv. 32: “Did not our heart *burn* within us, while he talked with us by the way and opened to us the Scriptures?” and in Psalm xxxix. 3: “My heart was *hot* within me; while I was musing *the fire kindled*, and at the last I spake with my tongue;”—and also (more particularly) the impulse of the prophetic inspiration; as in Jeremiah xx. 8, 9; where the Prophet declares, “The word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me and a derision daily” (my testimony for God was turned into ridicule) “and then I said, I will not make mention of him nor speak any more in his name;” (I was tempted to shrink from standing up for God) “but *his word was in mine heart as a burning fire*

shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing and I could not stay ;” the Spirit of God within me could not be repressed ; it *would* burst forth in word and act.

And therefore, since the promised Spirit of Christianity is (as we have learned from Joel) the Spirit of a Prophet, full of the Divine influence ; by this same image is expressed its presence and power. So it was symbolized to the disciples on the day of Pentecost, when there came a rushing mighty wind (the symbol of the Spirit’s life-giving breath), and there appeared to them lambent flames of fire (the symbol of his ardent energy), and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit moved them to proclaim the wondrous works of God. And so St. Paul would have it to exist in the heart of every Christian, when he exhorts the Thessalonians, “Quench not the Spirit,”—do not smother and put out his sacred fire : and the Romans, “Be ye fervent in spirit, serving the Lord :” and the timid Timothy, “Stir up”—rouse into a flame—“the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands ; for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of *power and of love and of a sound*” (*a healthy, vigorous*) “*mind*.”

This then is that power of the Holy Ghost which, as our Homily for Whitsunday declares, “openeth the mouth to declare the mighty works

of God, engendereth a *burning zeal* towards God's word, and giveth *all men* a tongue, yea and a fiery tongue, so that they may boldly and cheerfully profess the truth in the face of the whole world." This is that divine enthusiasm without which no man was ever great or good, which alone produces noble thoughts and noble deeds. This gave a sacred dignity to St. Peter on the day of Pentecost when he rose up and exclaimed before them all, "These are not drunken as you suppose, but this is that which Joel spake of when he said 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.'" This put force and efficacy into his address when he declared, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ;" and when they heard this they were pricked to the heart, and there were added to the church three thousand souls. This, again, endued the disciples with a calm and modest bravery when they said to the assembly of the rulers "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." This filled their hearts with power from on high when they prayed and said "Now Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word; and when they

had prayed the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and spake the word of God with boldness." This stirred itself in Stephen when he "being full of the Holy Ghost looked up stedfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." This animated Paul when he exclaimed to the Ephesians "None of these things move me neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry that I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." This invested him with dignity and grace when he declared before the heathen governor, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but show forth the words of truth and soberness;" and when he cried to the terrified mariners, "Sirs, I exhort you to be of good cheer, for there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve." And this manifested all its fervour in him among the Corinthians, when, though he was with them "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, his speech and his preaching were in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

Nor was this power of the Holy Ghost less present and effectual in subsequent ages of the church. "Give me a man," says Lactantius, "passionate headstrong and unruly—by the words of God he

shall become gentle as a lamb. Give me a greedy covetous and churlish man—he shall become a generous creature, full of rich benevolence. Give me a cruel and blood-thirsty man—he shall put on a mild and gracious spirit. Give me a dishonest man, a foolish man, a sensual man—he shall be made honest wise and virtuous.” “Hear,” says St. Cyprian, “that which is felt before it is learnt, that which is not collected together by long study, but which is received by the *power of grace*. While I lay in darkness, driven about by the waves of this world, a stranger to truth and light, that which the Divine mercy promised for my salvation seemed to me altogether hard and difficult; namely, that a man should be born again, and laying aside what he had once been should become in soul and mind a different man. How, said I, is so great a change possible? That what so long had taken root should be done away? And thus entangled in my errors I believed there could be no deliverance; and while I despaired of amendment I gave myself up to all my vices as if they had been a part of myself. But when, the water of regeneration having washed away the stains of my former life, the light from above shed itself into a heart freed from guilt and purified; when the Spirit from heaven had been breathed into me and formed me by a second birth into a new man; then most wonderfully that became certain to

me which had been doubtful before ; that was open which had been closed ; that became easy which had been difficult ; that became practicable which before had been impossible ; so that the life which I have now entered on is the beginning of a life proceeding from God, a life produced and quickened by the Holy Ghost. From God, I say, from God is all our might, and from him do we receive all *life and power !* ”

And where then is this mighty Spirit now ? Where are these thoughts that breathe and words that *burn* ? Where is that calm yet vigorous, quiet yet effective, meek yet manly energy, which was predicted by the Prophets, promised by the Baptist, and given by the risen Jesus to his Apostles and his Church ? Woe, woe, unto us for we have sinned ! We have been careless of the sacred fire, —we have suffered the holy flame to quiver and to sink upon the altar of our hearts,—and we are cold and dull and dead ! O for life and power from on high ! O to join the church continually in the aspirations of her ordination hymn,—

“ Come Holy Ghost our souls inspire,  
And lighten with celestial fire !  
Thy blessed unction from above,  
Is comfort, LIFE, AND FIRE OF LOVE ! ”

PART II.

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THE DEVELOPMENT

OF

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

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They which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season; they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only-begotten son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

Article XVII.

Bonus vir sine Deo nemo est. An potest aliquis supra fortunam nisi ab illo adjutus, exsurgere? Ille dat consilia magnifica et erecta. In unoquoque virorum bonorum habitat Deus.—Animum excellentem... coelestis potentia agit. . . . Non potest res tanta sine adminiculo numinis stare.

SENECA. *Ep.* xli.

A good man is the work of God ; for how can any one rise above the influence of outward things without his help ? He is the source of all magnificent and elevated thoughts. He dwells in the heart of every one that is good. The virtuous mind is actuated by a heavenly influence ; for only by the help of God can such a mind be formed.



## PART II.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE SOURCE OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

TRUTHS will influence the conduct in proportion as they become domesticated, as it were, in the mind. And they will become thus domesticated in proportion to the frequency with which they are called up therein, the completeness in which they present themselves, and the number of different trains of thought with which they are interwoven.

To know a subject therefore practically, so as to be influenced thereby, we must not only turn our attention to it *repeatedly*; but we must investigate it *thoroughly*; and consider it *connectedly*, throughout the range of its associations.

Having then now brought together the several particulars which make up the scriptural conception

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of the Inward Life of Christianity, I would next turn the attention of my reader to the Process by which that life is ordinarily developed in the consciousness.

And here, in the first place, I would show that *this Inward Life must take its rise in the depths of the human spirit.*

For Christianity is a remedy for human guilt and corruption, and the Spirit therefore which applies that remedy to the individual soul, must reach and influence the very seat of the disease, if it would radically purify the character. Deep as is our depravity, so deep must commence our sanctification.

Now the source of the habitual thoughts and conduct—of all that properly constitutes the *character* of a man—lies in the prevailing temper which has formed itself within him from earliest infancy, and which, by virtue of precedence and pre-occupation, configures all successive impressions and acts. And this prevailing temper, in the present nature of “every man naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam,” is, alas! sensuous and corrupt. There is a generic disposition of our fallen humanity, which forms as it were the nucleus round which all subsequent conceptions arrange themselves; the substance to which they assimilate; the type according to which they crystallize. The instincts and appetites of the body form its centre; the passions of the

animal will dispose themselves around it ; and the ever-changing objects of the world supply incessant stimulants to develop the evil mass. And according to the influence of this we view the truths presented to us ;—they are tinged with the jaundice of our diseased nature. According to this we are determined in our judgments purposes and actions. And according to this therefore the general character is formed ; a character common in its broader features to all men, but modified in its details by the *proportion* of the several appetites desires and imaginations to each other in different minds.

This inward source of character and conduct is what is called in Scripture, the heart, the flesh, the natural man. In this lies the well-spring of human action ; and from this flows that silent but powerful current which bears us onward, almost unconsciously, in a direction far away from God. O what a dangerous energy is constantly exerting itself within us,—the more effectually because beneath the light of consciousness ! What a fountain of evil is constantly throwing forth its bitter waters, and corrupting each purer thought that may be thrown into the mind ! How shall we counteract its power ?—how shall we dam up or turn its ever-swelling current ? Is it not clear that nothing *partial* can stem that which is so extensive ; nothing *temporary* can restrain that which is so constant ?

And hence it is that all the moral influences which man himself can bring to bear upon his character are so inadequate. Much is attempted by appeals to self-interest and prudential calculation ; much by the sense of shame, and love of reputation ; much by the dictates of elevated moral sentiment and refined taste ; much by pleas for conscience, that is, for the peace which follows a conformity to our convictions. And these all are good and valuable. These all do something. These all are to be plied in every way to stem the torrent of corruption. But, I ask observation and I ask experience—*How far do they go ?* What is the *extent* of their influence on the inward man ? The one characteristic and the one defect of all is, that they are but *partial* in their operation ; they may *modify* the native principle but they do not *change* it ; they may confine the stream in narrower bounds, or they may turn it somewhat from its course, or they may produce therein occasional counter currents, but it is the same stream still ; too often flowing but the deeper for the narrowing of its banks, too often running but the faster in one channel, from the *partial* obstruction that it meets with in another. The principle of evil is not materially weakened though the development of evil is restrained. The arguments of Prudence may successfully oppose the sins which manifestly injure us. Regard for Reputation may keep down all that

is accounted shameful in good society. Good taste may check whatever wounds our delicacy. The desire of inward Peace may stimulate us to keep our conduct up to the level of our principles. But then, with all these various influences brought to bear upon the *manifestations* of corruption, what, again I ask, is really done with its hidden source? The remedies are *partial*, and *partial* only therefore can be the cure. The symptoms are attacked and modified; the disease remains.

And equally ineffectual must be every *temporary* obstruction which human power can apply, however *extensive* it may be for the time it lasts. There are indeed circumstances which sometimes rouse the whole man into opposition to his evil nature. There are moments when all his feelings are enlisted on the side of duty; when every motive to it is combined; when the folly danger grossness misery of sin so flash upon the mind, that we see it in its true light and we hate it and denounce it. Providential occurrences will do this. The preaching of the word of God will do this. Sudden reminiscences will do this. The menaces of danger and of death will do this. And for a time the important work seems done; the stream of evil seems dammed up; the current is thrown back upon itself; the man seems left uninfluenced by it, free to turn himself wherever he may please:—yet even now the flood is

gathering strength, collecting all its energy, sapping the temporary barrier, till down it pours in all its fury, rushing onward but the more impetuously for its momentary repression. O the utter insufficiency of merely human motive! O the absolute necessity of something more than this in both *extent* and *permanency*; nay of a higher kind than any power that earth can furnish! Must not all effectual reformation begin within, in the principle itself; and not merely be opposed from without, to its results? Must not the bitter stream itself be cleansed by the casting in of a divine remedy? Must not the very spring-head of the evil be made the spring-head of the good?

I answer in the words of one who knew full well the powers of human reason,\* and I say, "The spirit of prudential motive, however ennobled by the magnitude and awfulness of its objects, and though as the termination of a lower it may be the commencement (and not seldom the *occasion*) of an higher state, is not, even in respect of *morality* itself, that abiding and continuous principle of action which is either *one* with the faith spoken of by St. Paul, or its immediate offspring. It cannot be that spirit of obedience to the commands of Christ, by which the soul dwelleth in him and he in it (1 John iii. 4), and which our Saviour himself announces as a being

\* Coleridge. Second Lay Sermon.

*born again.* And this indispensable act or influence or impregnation, of which as of a divine tradition the eldest philosophy is not silent ; which flashed through the darkness of the pagan mysteries ; and which it was therefore a reproach to a Master in Israel that he had not already known (John iii) ; this is elsewhere explained as a seed which, though of gradual development, did yet *potentially* contain the essential form not merely of a better but of an *other* life ; amidst all the frailties and transient eclipses of mortality making, I repeat, the subjects of this regeneration not so properly better as *other* men, whom therefore the world could not but hate as aliens. Its own native growth, however improved by cultivation (whether through the agency of blind sympathies or of an intelligent self-interest, the utmost heights to which the *worldly life* can ascend) the world has always been ready and willing to acknowledge and admire. ‘ They are of the world ; therefore speak they out of the heart of the world, and the world heareth them.’ ”

Hence then, you perceive, it follows, in the second place, that *this Inward Life must spring from a Divine source.*

For, the depths of the human spirit who can penetrate and who can influence, but He who is its maker and sustainer ? What we ourselves perceive of our own minds in the moment of self-con-

sciousness is not one millionth part of that vast store of conceptions and those innumerable trains of thought which, far below the ken of inward contemplation, are ever living and effective in the soul; seething (as it were) in its unfathomed depths, and causing, every instant, changes sudden and extensive in the surface waves which we behold. And the laws of those changes who can calculate? the forces which are thus in constant operation who can reach? To work effectually therefore upon our spirits by our own unassisted skill and force is far beyond the power of man. We may catch a glimpse of some of the more general laws of thought, we may conjecture the existence of manifold concurrent causes, we may learn by long experience what we must avoid and what pursue upon the whole; but who can touch the heart? Who can discover the secret spring that sets in motion all its complicated and inexplicable workings? Who can supply the regulator which controls and harmonizes them? Who but God who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, and worketh in men both to will and to do?

Besides, the rise of Piety in the soul takes place, not as a mechanical effect but as a living growth. Even in cases where it seems to break the most suddenly on the consciousness and on the world it has been a growth. And to this growth,



not ourselves alone but all persons and all circumstances without intermission have contributed. Any one condition of mind at any one moment is the product of the circumstances of that moment, multiplied into all its preceding conditions. And who is the arranger of those circumstances and the efficient cause of those conditions but the God in whom we live and move? The blessed principles and feelings of true religion do not then first begin to be, when our attention is engaged by them; the moment of their birth into the consciousness is not the moment of their generation in the soul. The seeds thereof have been thrown in from time to time by the ever-working providence and grace of God; they have long been buried in the clods of the earthly nature; they have been secretly impregnated by the all-pervading Spirit of life; they have expanded silently and unsuspected; they put forth timidly their delicate shoots; often they are met and nipped by the chilling blasts of an uncongenial world and they shrink again into themselves; till some more favourable moment is vouchsafed them; a gentler air breathes over them; they burst through every remaining obstacle, they press up through all the superincumbent weight of earthliness, and there they are! discoverable now by the downward glance of meditation, perceptible to the mind that ponders on itself, and gladdening with their young

and tender verdure the admiring soul. All growth, in mind as in nature, *must* be mysterious, and independent of ourselves. We can perceive only that things *have* grown : we have not eyes to trace them *in* their growth.

“ Who ever saw the earliest rose  
First open her sweet breast ? ”

And who can chronicle the growth of friendship and the buddings of affection ? Do we not awake to the perception of them as if some sudden light had only now made clearer to us sentiments which, in the very moment of their development, we feel to be familiar with ; and which therefore we do not so much discover as recognize within us ?

And just so is it with the dawn of Piety in the mind. We welcome it as congenial though we feel it to be not natural to us. It is in us yet it is not *of us*. It bears upon itself the stamp of heavenly origin. We confess with St. Paul that it “ has pleased God to reveal his Son in us.” We cry in the words of Jesus to St. Peter, “ Blessed art thou, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee but thy Father which is in heaven.” And we exclaim with the Apostle, “ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God ! For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen ! ”

This then is the truth which Scripture expresses so emphatically when it declares: "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John iii. 8.) "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." (James i. 18.) "We have received, not the spirit of the world but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor. ii. 12.) "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, which were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God." (John i. 12, 13.)

And so the Bishops and Fathers of our church. "Holy we cannot be," says Bishop Andrews, "by any habit, moral or acquisite. There is none such in all moral philosophy. As we have our faith by illumination, so have we our holiness by inspiration; 'receive' both from without. To a habit the Philosophers came and so Christians may. But that will not serve; they must go further. Our habits acquisite will lift us no further than they did the heathen men; no further than the place where they grow, that is earth and nature. They cannot work beyond their kind (nothing can), nor

rise higher than their spring. It is not, therefore, '*si habitum acquisistis*,' but '*si spiritum recepistis*,' that we must go by."—"The condition of man after the fall of Adam," says our Tenth Article, "is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God: wherefore, we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the *grace of God* by Christ, preventing us that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will." "It is the Holy Ghost," says our Homily for Whitsunday, "and no other thing, that doth quicken the minds of men, stirring up good and godly motions in their hearts, which are agreeable to the will and commandment of God, such as otherwise of their own crooked and perverse nature they should never have. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. As who should say, Man of his own nature is fleshly and carnal, corrupt and naught, sinful and disobedient to God, without any spark of goodness in him, without any virtuous or godly motion, only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds. As for the works of the Spirit, the fruits of faith, charitable and godly motions, if he have any at all in him, they proceed only of the Holy Ghost, who is the only worker of our sanctification, and maketh us new men in Christ Jesus." "Lord of all power and

might," we pray in various collects, "who art the author of all godliness—without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy—by whose only inspiration we can think those things that be good—from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed—graft in our hearts the love of thy name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

If then such be the Source of the Spiritual Life, we see at once the DIFFICULTIES which this subject must unavoidably present to every superficial thinker. To him who is indifferent to his danger as a sinner alienated from God, and not awake to the absolute *necessity* of this new life to his salvation, the mysterious inwardness and divinity of its rise in the spirit must ever produce surprise and cavil. He knows not himself and the depths of his own heart and the inveteracy of his disease, and he cannot therefore understand the nature of the remedy that he needs. He thinks and lives in the world of sense, and everything pertaining to the world of spirit must be strange to him. The whole region is to him an untrodden, nay an unimagined one, and it is but natural therefore that he should doubt, and perhaps deride, the report of others as he would a traveller's tale of wonder. Piety is a

spiritual experience ; that is, it lies beyond the sphere of sense ; and cannot therefore be described or demonstrated under the forms of sense ; and consequently we who plead for it, must be prepared to meet objections drawn from such a source with dignified tranquillity. We shall not think to solve them while yet the very ear is wanting by which the solution can be heard, and the heart by which it can be understood ; but shall seek rather to address ourselves to the *deeper* source of all objections,—the indifference and self-ignorance and false security from which they spring. This was the method Jesus took with Nicodemus (John iii. 4—8). When the latter asked him, “*How* can a man be born when he is old ?” he attempts not to answer this “*How*,” till he has pressed upon the conscience of the objector the absolute necessity of the experience itself about which he objects. “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” All difficulties about the *manner* of the workings of Religion are but the trifling of an unconcerned mind ; but when the *necessity* of Religion is once felt, when a holy earnestness comes over us, and we heartily desire and seek the thing itself, then are we prepared either to have our

real perplexities removed, or to learn with humble acquiescence that they are not removable to finite man. And therefore Jesus having re-asserted to Nicodemus the great truth which he began with, and shown the absolute necessity of its experience in every man, from the simple fact that all are born with an earthly nature and cannot therefore possibly be fit for a heavenly state till into that earthly nature has been infused a heavenly one ("he only that is born of the Spirit can be spiritual"); having thus solemnly re-asserted the necessity of the *fact*, let the *manner* be intelligible or not; then first recurs to the question of the Jewish Ruler, *How* can such a change take place, not indeed to answer it but to indicate its unanswerableness; not to unfold the mysteries of the human spirit and of its transition from death to life but to declare that they are far too deep for our perception; for while *results* of thought present themselves in the consciousness and issue out in the conduct, the *causes* of thought, and its occasions and its complex associations and its manifold workings, are hidden from the human eye. It is with the spirit that breathes within us even as with the wind that breathes around us,—sensible in its effects but hidden in its source. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth ;

so,"——similar in what is perceptible and what is imperceptible ; similar in the certainty of the facts and in the uncertainty of the cause and manner,——  
“so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” The Spiritual Life may be experienced in the consciousness and will display itself in the conduct ; but how it came into the heart, and whence it came,—these are matters not of observation but of faith.

But what ENCOURAGEMENT does this truth of the Divine origin of Piety afford, to every one who desires the experience of it in himself ! If you comprehend enough of the awful purity of God and of the corruption of your own heart, to feel the absolute necessity of a change in you the sinner, in order to your dwelling with Him the Holy One ; of a participation of the Divine nature now, in order to your entering into the Divine glory hereafter ; then, I ask you, where will you go for such a transformation ? Whence will you derive it ? How will you effect it ? Can flesh develop itself into spirit ? Can it give birth spontaneously and by its natural virtue to anything above its own kind ? Can understanding expand beyond the confines of the sphere for which it has been formed, and in which it dwells and acts ? Can the heavenly and divine spring out from the earthly and human ? Can the Ethiopian change his skin and the leopard his spots ; or



he who has been accustomed to do evil, of himself do good? And what hope then can you have of being renewed in the spirit of your mind, if that renewal does not come from God! But if it does!—then is there hope for you, for every man who turns to seek the blessing from its proper source; for, you and every man are within the range of the all-encircling love of God. He is your FATHER; and he has a Father's ear for every sigh of supplication that is breathed towards him, and a Father's bountifulness to bestow the blessings that you ask for. Were indeed the source of good to be sought within yourself what could we say to cheer you, for you yourself are empty of all good; but if it be in God, (and in God it is abundantly) then may we address you with the mingled exhortation and reproof and promises of Holy Writ,—“Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and the scorers delight in their scorning? Turn you at my reproof; behold, *I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you!*” Do you hesitate because you feel yourself unworthy? Do you keep away from God because you have not the Spirit of God?—Remember that you cannot find this Spirit till you come to Him to receive it from Him as his gift; but yet, that on this very account your Saviour has prepared a way for your approach

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to God, has thrown wide open the doors of His presence-chamber, that you may have access to his grace and gain from him the Spirit of adoption whereby you may cry Abba Father !

And do you ask what are the MEANS by which this gift must be sought, the channels through which it descends into the soul? The very nature of the Gift sufficiently points out the nature of those Means. For God must influence the spirit of man in a spiritual manner,—that is, by introducing and awakening thoughts and feelings which may work within the mind according to the laws of mind, and thus bring home the remedy to the very seat, and in accordance with the very form and character, of the disease. The Spirit of God is Mind; and therefore works by Mind, and is to be found in Mind, and communicates himself through Mind. By intercourse with our own soul; by intercourse with the souls of other Christians; by intercourse with God, who is the soul of our soul and of theirs; shall we obtain that living Spirit which we need.

Let us cultivate then *Intercourse with ourselves*; acquaintance with our own mind and heart and character;—reflection, meditation, self-inspection, self-knowledge. “The true knowledge of ourselves,” says our Second Homily, “is necessary, to come to the right knowledge of God:” “He who knows himself,” says an ancient Heathen writer, “will

know God ; and he who knows God, will become like God : and he who becomes like God, will walk worthy of God, thinking speaking and acting even as God would think and speak and act." All depends on pausing to consider our own ways ; finding out the man within ourselves and becoming intimate and at home in our own bosom. Not that we need laborious thought ; difficult abstraction ; mystic musings ; morbid brooding over frames and feelings ; anything that cannot be pursued by the most occupied or the least intellectual :—but simply, that observing of ourselves as we observe other men, that questioning of ourselves, keeping account of ourselves, talking with ourselves, which exalts the thinking man above the heedless child, and makes him live for something higher than to be the slave and sport of each successive outward object that may present itself to his bodily eyes or ears. The considering who we are ; what we are ; whence we are ; why we are ; whither we are going :—the pondering on our relation to God who is our Father ; to the world which is our school of discipline ; to men who are our brethren ; and to eternity which is our home. So shall we understand our actual state of mind ; our spiritual wants ; the suitableness of the Gospel truths and promises to their supply ; the course we are to run ; the steps that we must take ; beginning with ourselves to end with God.

And let us add to this, *Intercourse with our Fellow Christians*. For all the experiences of Religion depend upon the influences of the Spirit of God; and the Spirit of God resides in the Church of Christ, and diffuses itself by means of the members of Christ. It is a *Family Spirit*, to be caught by intercourse with that Family. And therefore the grand means appointed by Christ himself for its communication has ever been the social intercourse of Christians. This he promised his Apostles when he said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter which shall abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you," speaking here not to any individual separately, (the pronouns are plural,) but to the *whole collectively* as a united body. Wherefore it was that he afterwards commanded them not to break up their community and separate themselves to different parts, saying that "they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father which they had heard of him;" and then, "when they were all with one accord in one place," that promise was fulfilled and they were filled with the Holy Ghost. For this moreover, he has given "Apostles and Prophets and Evangelists and Pastors and Teachers, for the

perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministering to their spiritual wants, for the edifying of the body of Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and *compacteth by that which every joint supplieth*, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." For this, he has commanded us by his Apostle "not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together," because "where two or three are gathered together in his name there is he in the midst of them." For this, he gives the manifestation of the Spirit to every Christian man that he may profit his brethren therewith. And therefore to participate in this, we must be regular and frequent in public worship, in family and social prayer, in friendly Christian intercourse, thereby to nourish and renew the Spiritual Life. We must place ourselves in the atmosphere of the Spirit if we would inhale the Spirit. The principle of Social interest, which leads us to join ourselves to other men; the principle of Imitation, which bends the mind unconsciously in the direction of those to whom we join ourselves; the principle of Sympathy, which makes the slightest thought and feeling of our own mind to be increased to a fourfold intensity by our consciousness, first of its participation by those around us, next of their being sensible themselves of this participation, then of their emotions being heightened by this sympathy with ours, and finally of their thus responding

not to us alone but to all the rest in mutual communion with us ;—these several mighty means of influence on the human heart, by which the Spirit of God communicates as through the links of an electric chain the element of spiritual life, must all be grasped by us if we would thrill with fire from heaven.

But then, with both these means we must unite *Intercourse with God* by secret prayer. For Prayer re-acts upon all other influences, and collects them into the unity of our own spirit, and diffuses them through every power of the man. And Prayer brings down into the midst of every thought and train of thought the idea of God ; reminds us that ourselves are in the presence and under the control of God ; our circumstances have been all arranged by God ; our opportunities of grace have been ordained by God ; our teachers have been commissioned by God ; our Christian friends are actuated and blessed by God ; and thus infuses into the most ordinary objects persons and occurrences, the character and power of a divine communication to the soul. “ Now therefore,” said Cornelius to St. Peter, “ we are all here present *before God*, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” And what was the result of this devout infusion of the thought of God into all the words that Peter then addressed to them ?—“ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.”

## CHAPTER II.

## THE PROCESS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

THE Spiritual Life must, we have seen, from the very nature of our being, take its rise in the inscrutable depths of the human soul, and have its source in the secret inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But the development of this life must not the less, from this same nature of our being, become manifest to the consciousness of the Individual; and the Process of that Development will, moreover, from the general similarity of man to man, be for the most part similar in all religious minds. These are the two points which will occupy the present chapter.

And first,—The Development of Spiritual Life must become manifest to the consciousness of the individual in whom it is awakened. For deep and hidden as are the mass of our conceptions in the recesses of the spirit, their workings and results become both seen and felt by that peculiar power of self-consciousness—of introspection and inward

sense—with which we are endowed. The essence of Mind we cannot discover, any more than we can the essences of the external world; but the phenomena of Mind are presented to the inward intuition, just as the phenomena of matter are to the outward observation. We cannot possess vigorous thoughts affections and purposes on any subject and of any kind, without becoming more or less conscious of their existence; that is, without a *feeling* and *experience* of the goings on within us. And as generally on any subject that interests us, so particularly must there be such feeling and experience on the subject of *Religion*; if indeed this last have seized on our attention and become alive in our heart. “Religious experience” is indeed a phrase often mistaken and sometimes misused; but it expresses a fact or series of facts in the consciousness, without which no man can be saved. It denotes all those exercises of the mind and heart which indicate that Religion is not merely a profession and a creed, but an influence and a life. It expresses the *finding in ourselves* the realities, the things signified, of which words are but the shadows and the signs. And only therefore as we do *find in ourselves* (that is, *experience*) these realities, can we truly *understand* the words which dimly indicate them. For by *experience* only, either that of external



sensation or of internal consciousness, can we understand any terms which are the signs of *facts* occurring in that sensation or that consciousness. If a man tells me of a bodily sensation—a head-ache, for example—I *understand* him only so far as that sensation has been present to myself; and I reply either “I cannot enter into your feelings, for I never *experienced* what a head-ache is,”—or “I understand you, for I have *experienced* the same.” If he speaks to me of esteem, gratitude, affection,—which are mental sensations sentiments or feelings,—I can answer, “Yes, I know well what you mean, for I have *experienced* such sentiments myself.” If he tells me of the glow of admiration which came over him at the contemplation of such or such a lovely scene; or of the thrill of pleasure which was awakened in him by such or such melodious sounds; here again I can believe he is not uttering rapturous nonsense, because I have myself *experienced* the same emotions. And *just similarly in Religion*. There are *experiences* of the conscience and the heart, by finding which within ourselves we can alone supply a meaning to the glowing words and images of Scripture, or can regard the men themselves who use those words as other than enthusiasts of Oriental warmth of temperament and exaggeration of language. Either their expressions mean something weighty and essential to Religion,

or they do not. And if they do mean something weighty and essential to Religion (which every one who reverences the Bible or its authors will at once concede), then, from the nature of the case, that meaning cannot be collected merely by critical interpretation, and conveyed by verbal definition, but must be supplied by personal experience. Notions may be conveyed from mind to mind by logical definitions, but feelings can be only *indicated* by analogies, the sense of which must be found by the hearer for himself and in his own bosom. The one is as the imprinting of a stamp upon the understanding; the other is as the touching of a string whose vibrations wake up a corresponding chord in the heart. Therefore, without the *finding in ourselves* those states of consciousness which the Scripture writers found within themselves, and of which their words and images are short-hand signs, there can be no *possession of the mind* of the pious men of God, and therefore no real piety. In this, as in all practical truth, the axiom holds good, "*quantum sumus, scimus*"—only what we actually *are*, do we really know.

To answer—as, alas ! it has been answered—that the words of Scripture which indicate such experiences "mean nothing to us ; nothing (that is) to be found or sought for in the present circumstances of Christianity,"—is to confound the temporary with

the permanent, the ever varying *circumstances* of man with the ever similar *nature* of man. It is to forget the general principle which Scripture itself lays down; "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Man, in the essentials of his nature, is in all ages countries and circumstances the same; "with the same organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed by the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer." And, therefore similarly a *religious* man, in the essentials of his character, must be in all ages countries and circumstances the same; and notwithstanding all the accidental differences of form and of degree which may result from difference of knowledge temperament and situation, still whatever was essential to render a Jew pious, or a Roman pious, or an Ephesian or Colossian pious, must be equally essential to render an Englishman pious; nay, whatever workings of such piety were experienced in the vast translation from Heathenism to Christianity, such workings in substance must be similarly experienced, in the not less real and necessary translation from a nominal Christianity to a personal one; from a participation of the outward instructions and ordinances of a true church, to the participation of that inward

life of faith and love and hope, to be the occasion of which, those instructions and ordinances are vouchsafed. Separate the *accidental marks* of their experiences as Jews or Heathens, from their *essential ones* as corrupt and guilty men, and these latter must apply to us and be necessary to us. It was to *Israelites*, remember,—that is, to the chosen people of the true God, to men educated in the law of God and partakers of the ordinances of God,—that the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel cried, “Make you a new heart and a new spirit, lest ye die;” and that they promised from the Lord, “I will take away from you the heart of stone, and give to you a heart of flesh.” It was to a *Jew*,—a ruler of the Jews, a “most respectable” man,—that Jesus said, “Ye must be born again.” Nay it was to *Christianized* Ephesians, baptized Ephesians, members of the body of Christ, that St. Paul declares—“Put off the old man which is corrupt, and *be renewed in the spirit of your mind*, and put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” And shall then any Ecclesiastical privileges, any Baptismal grace, make such exhortations and such promises less indispensable to us?

Never then let this necessity of personal experience of the inward life be overlooked, lest we deceive ourselves with unwarrantable hopes of a salvation,

no earnest of which has ever yet been manifested in our heart or conduct. Much is said, I know, about a modest and a secret Piety,—about avoiding ostentation and hypocrisy, and disclaiming pretensions to enthusiastic movements of the mind, and keeping the awful subject of Religion between our conscience and our God. But as much must be said, upon the other hand, about life being knowable only by its actings; and principles and feelings only by their manifestations. However secret the causes, yet surely the effects, to be actual (that is, to be effects at all), must come out into the consciousness and conduct. We should give little credit to that asserted patience which produced no actual calm of mind; or to that professed affection which left the heart unmoved by any ripple of emotion; or to that declared devotion to our interests of which no trace betrayed itself by acts of zeal and service. We do not indeed wish a friend to boast incessantly of the attachment that he feels for us; but still we should not quite expect the secret of it to be so marvellously well preserved, that neither to ourselves, nor any one besides, should any glimmer of it struggle into view. Nor does the man of taste, perhaps, attempt to analyze his feelings very metaphysically, or pore over them with morbid sensibility; yet, most certainly a man of taste he could not be if he had not these feelings; if all objects

and all subjects were to him alike indifferent; if his eye never glistened at some splendid scene of nature, and his heart never leaped up at some noble act of heroism, and his spirit never quivered like a well-strung instrument when the breath of eloquence swept over it, or the strains of music lingered on its chords. O why will men think of banishing emotion from Religion when they feel that on every other subject of interest and of grandeur and of beauty, to be without emotion is to be without the characteristic of humanity! Why will they give to the flesh and to the world their very soul, and reserve for Him who made that soul, the dregs alone, the flat residuum which may be left when all its life has been drawn off and all its nobler workings have subsided! Let no man fancy that he loves God if he be not *conscious* that he loves God. Let no man flatter himself that he is serving God if the seeming good that he can point to in his conduct has not sprung from *pious* motive, intelligent self-dedication, affectionate communion with his heavenly Father. He who is "a godly person," according to our Seventeenth Article, "*must feel in himself the workings of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and his earthly members and drawing up his mind to high and heavenly things.*" And he who has "the very sure and lively Christian faith," according to our

Fourth Homily, "this Faith doth not lie dead in the heart, but is lively and fruitful in bringing forth good works." For, "as the light cannot be hid, but *will* show forth itself at one place or another; so a true faith *cannot be secret*, but when occasion is offered it will break out and show itself by good works. And as the living body of a man ever exerciseth such things as belong to a natural and living body for nourishment and preservation of the same, as it hath need opportunity and occasion; even so the soul that hath a lively faith in it will be doing always some good work which shall declare that it is living, and will not be unoccupied."—"This is the true lively and unfeigned Christian faith, and is not in the mouth and outward profession only, but it *liveth and stirreth inwardly in the heart*."—"The wind," says our blessed Lord, "bloweth where it listeth, and no man knoweth whence it cometh and whither it goeth, but *thou hearest the sound thereof*." The *source* of personal Religion may be inscrutable, but *the fact* itself, *the thing*—the actual elevation of the mind, and spiritualizing of the affections, and renewing of the purposes, and sanctifying of the tastes and habits and pursuits,—this will be, in him who is truly new-born, as plain and palpable as the contrary condition of impenitence and fleshliness is plain and palpable. *By their fruits*, the two distinctive principles—the old

man and the new man—must be known. “A good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things, even as an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things ; for *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*” Reader, where are *your* evidences of personal piety? Where are your fruits,—of inward love and outward holiness? We cannot do without these. We must not indeed search for them in unessential or deceptive marks. But we must search for them. We must not derive them from merely temporary frames and feelings, or supposed illapses of the Spirit. We must not delude ourselves upon the one hand, or torment ourselves upon the other, by placing dependence on casual experiences which may, after all, (both the good and the evil) be only bodily sensations or, at most, excited states of mind. But at the same time evidences we must have. And those evidences we must seek and find *in the general pulse of the soul*;—not in its variations which may often unnecessarily raise or depress us, but in its *existence* ; not in the *degrees* of love to God and prayerfulness and energy and zeal, but in *the fact* that we have such love and prayerfulness and energy and zeal at all. Surely a man may know whether he *have* love for his father or his mother,



his wife or his children, his brother or his friend! And just by the same *general evidence of permanent consciousness* may he know whether he have love to God, and be his child in spirit and in truth; in a word, whether he possess *the inward life of Christianity*. "Hereby we know that God abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us." 1 John iii. 24.

It remains now to consider, in the Second Place, that as the Development of the Spiritual Life must be more or less manifest to the consciousness of the Individual, so *the process of this manifestation will be, for the most part, similar in all religious minds*.

For the natural condition of all men is the same, whatever the varieties of form in which it may be manifested. The corruption of man's heart is as general a fact as the existence of man's nature. In "every man naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam" sinfulness is now a characteristic of humanity. It is as true now as it was in the days of Noah that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." It is as undeniable now as it was in the days of Jeremiah that the heart of man is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." It is as certain now as it was in the days of Jesus that "out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." And therefore the assertions

of Scripture touching our depravity are made of man as man, and expressed in a universal form. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." John iii. 6. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans iii. 23. "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." Eccl. vii. 20. "What is man, that he should be clean, and he that is born of a woman that he should be righteous?" Job xv. 14. "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" Prov. xx. 9.

And as the natural condition is thus similar in all men, so equally must be the necessities which result from such a condition; the sum of which necessities is, Deliverance from a state of sinfulness with all its workings and concomitants into a state of Holiness; which Deliverance therefore is the grand benefit announced by Revelation, provided for in Christ, and placed within the reach of all to whom the glad tidings of Christianity are proclaimed. The remedy is commensurate with the disease.

But if the Disease be universal, and equally so the Remedy, then certainly the *mode of operation* of that Remedy must, in all essential points, be similar. The method (or path of transit) of the Deliverance from a state of sinfulness into a state of Holiness, must be but one and the same for all. The course of Christian experience, however marked by different

accidental circumstances in different individuals, and however varying in intensity or in rapidity according to their temperament or opportunities, must exhibit certain general features common to each particular case. And hence it is that St. Paul lays down the principal steps of this transition in consecutive order, when he tells the Romans, "Whom God did predestinate them he also called, and whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified;" and that Christian churches and divines have always noted them with more or less distinctness in their Confessions and their Theological Systems; the fullest as well as the most exquisite example of which is afforded us incidentally in the Seventeenth Article of the Church of England, where she declares that they who be endued with the benefit of God's predestination "be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season; they through Grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made Sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works, and at length by God's mercy they attain to everlasting felicity."

If then we simply cast our eyes on some of the broader facts of the unrenewed soul, and consider what is the transformation which the mere existence of those facts supposes necessary in order to the

realizing of that sense of God as our Father which constitutes, as we have before seen, the Essence of Christian Piety, we shall perceive I think that the development of the Spiritual Life wherever it has been awakened, must manifest itself in something like the following progression of Experience.

First.—All men are by nature *indifferent to God*. They do not willingly think of Him, do not desire the knowledge of his ways, are fully occupied with the cares the interests and the pleasures of their earthly nature ; and thus live practically “without God in the world.” The first step therefore which they need towards Piety is *to have their attention awakened* to the cares the interests and the pleasures of their spiritual nature ; to have their minds roused from the torpor of indifference to divine things ; and to find the thought of God, and of their relation to Him, and of all the solemn consequences of that relation, made alive within them. And this the Scriptures denominate their *Calling*,—their being awakened out of sleep,—their being raised up from the dead.

Secondly.—Men are *ignorant of God*. They know him not ; they understand Him not ; and even when an interest in the thought of Him has been awakened, that thought is vague imperfect feeble ; it is for the most part an “unknown God” whom they are “feeling after if haply they may find him, though

he is not far from every one of them." Here then they need farther to have their understanding opened to his character, his will, his demands upon their conscience, his doings in their behalf, his invitations and directions to them. And this is called in Scripture their *Illumination*—Christ giving to them light—their being taught of God in the Gospel of His Son.

Thirdly.—The hearts of men are *averse to God*. The thought of Him is not welcome; it is irksome; they would rather be without it. And this, not only on account of its *strangeness* as contrasted with the nature of their earthly imaginations and pursuits—the Spiritual not sorting well with the Sensual; and not only on account of its *dimness*, its being so unfamiliar and perplexing—as no man likes the contemplation of Ideas whose obscurity upbraids his ignorance; but still more, because of its *contrariety*; because of the natural opposition that exists between Sinfulness and Holiness, the resistance of the evil nature to the demands of Goodness, and the consequent dislike which rises against Him who is the Ideal of that Holiness, the Author and Enforcer of those demands, and whose very purity, the more it is perceived and understood, becomes the more reproachful to us,—our image darkening by the contrast, as the image of the Holy One emerges into greater brightness.

We need therefore the removal, or at least the repression, of this sense of contrariety; we need the softening of this opposing will; the winning over of this Cain-like sullenness; the casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and the bringing every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ: so that the alien may be naturalized, the rebel be transformed into a loyal subject, the heart made friends with God and ready to obey his will. And this the Scriptures call *Repentance*, or a change of mind towards God; *Conversion*, or the turning back to God; *Regeneration*, or the new birth of a will in filial accordance with the will of God.

Fourthly.—Where there is indifference, and ignorance, and aversion, there also is *Dread of God*. A sense of contrariety brings with it a sense of guilt. For there is something in our nature which tells us unequivocally (speculate as we may) that we are responsible for our neglect, and deserve punishment for our dislike, of God. We feel that we owe to him a very different return for all his goodness to us, and that the debt *must* be reckoned to our account. And this dread of God is not removed even by the submission of our heart to him. Nay, it is deepened, in proportion to that growing consciousness of sin and guilt which accompanies the workings

of a true Repentance. For no sorrow for our breach of God's Law can do away the claims of that Law ; no resolutions for the future can obliterate the past. And the more therefore the heart is softened, the greater becomes its despondency. The stronger its desire to turn to God, the more it needs to be assured that it *may* turn to Him as to a Friend—a pacified forgiving satisfied Friend. A sense of personal acceptance, a trust in God as entering into a new relation with us, an animating consciousness of our heavenly Father's presence care and approbation—this is essential to our running the new race of holiness to which repentance pledges us, with that quiet vigour which alone ensures success. And this state of mind is called in Scripture the “having *Peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ”—the enjoying “fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ,”—the “*joying in God* through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the Atonement.”

Once more.—The unconverted man has no definite and lively *Hope in God*. The future is to him a blank, or at best the sphere of mere conjecture and assumption. Each imagined contingency of the present life excites, according to his temperament, unfounded expectation or anxious fear. He has no one on whom to cast the burden of the coming day. And with respect to the life to come, even if

he escapes the forebodings of an uneasy though slumbering conscience, he attains but to the vapid self-security of one who having gained the necessary passports to a foreign land thinks no more of his departure till the time of separation from his friends can be no longer delayed. His best anticipations are unthinking confidence. His worst are blank despair. Nor is the Christian *convert* without his perplexities and apprehensions. He feels almost alone in a world of trial and temptation. He cannot depend upon himself. He knows that few will understand him, sympathize with him, assist him in the race that he is running. He needs therefore a child-like confidence in God as his unfailing Counsellor and Preserver; dependence on his guidance and support through each successive difficulty of this world; and that "blessed Hope of everlasting life" which looks forward to the world to come as to our dwelling-place and home. And this the Scriptures call the spirit of *Assurance*—the "walking by *Faith* and not by sight,"—the "holding fast the confidence and the rejoicing of our hope firm unto the end"—the "rejoicing in *Hope* of the glory of God."

Such then are some of the principal manifestations of that Spiritual Life which, welling out from the secret fountains of the soul, purifies all the better feelings of our nature, and rises into that commingled Love and Joy and Hope, which constitute the



essential spirit of Christian Piety here, and the foretaste of eternal blessedness hereafter. O may God pour such a stream of Godliness and Gladness into our hearts!

## CHAPTER III.

## SPIRITUAL AWAKENING.

As we cannot appreciate the worth of Christianity in general unless we consider the actual condition and wants of human nature, to meet which Christianity was vouchsafed; so neither shall we be prepared to acquiesce in the Scripture statements concerning the process by which the life of Christianity usually manifests itself in the individual soul, unless we have fixed our attention on some of the broader features of our natural state of mind, and have thus convinced ourselves of the extent of the transformation that we need, in order to become new creatures in Christ Jesus. We must duly estimate the natural Indifference, Ignorance, Alienation, Dread, and Despondency of the human mind in relation to God, before we can duly estimate either the necessity or the worth of that spiritual Awakening, Illumination, Regeneration, Peace, and Hope, which the influences of the Holy Ghost produce.

Let us therefore now devote ourselves to the consideration of these particulars in detail. And First let us speak of Spiritual AWAKENING.

Men are naturally *indifferent to God*; this is the first broad fact of our fallen condition which the slightest observation may convince us of. They need therefore as the first step to Salvation to have *their attention awakened* to Him; this is the conclusion of Reason from the observation of that fact. And *this Awakening of attention is the work of God*; this is the Assertion of Scripture with respect to the supply of that need.

All our observation and experience testify to us the first broad Fact of our condition, that man is naturally *indifferent to God*. It is only by degrees that we gain any conception of God and of his relation to us, and of the infinite importance of that relation to our welfare; and without some knowledge of these truths there can of course be no interest in them. We are to God—all of us in childhood, many of us through youth and manhood, and many, alas! yet longer still, yea even throughout their lives—we are to God as the infant to its parent; deriving from Him our being; fed and warmed and nourished by His care; watched over by His never-sleeping eye; and guarded and sustained by his ever-extended arm; but yet *unconscious of Him*; occupied only with the gifts,

unknowing or heedless of the Giver ; and even when we do awake to the fact of His *Existence*, yet possessing no distinct impression of our dependence on Him ; still less of our responsibility to Him ; still less of the awful certainty that all our happiness, of body and of soul, for time and for eternity, hangs only on His favour.

And who knows not how this early indifference, arising from our natural unacquaintance with God, is strengthened and made habitual by our subsequent *indocility* and dulness with respect to spiritual things ! The *term* "God" may indeed soon become familiar to us (often too familiar !) ; his attributes and character we may perhaps be able to state out in words :—but the *Idea*—the *reality*—where is it felt ! What are its influences ? How far does it *live* within us ? The world and the things of the world first lay hold of the attention and preoccupy the heart ; and we know from Scripture testimony (we know it equally from experience and fact) that where the love of the world is, there is *not* the love of God ; "for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world." The very objects circumstances and occupations which, as means and steps of consideration, are capable of leading up the thoughts to God and bringing Him

before the mind, come crowding so importunately round us, that they exhaust our attention on *themselves* as *ends*, and interpose a veil to hide, instead of a transparent medium to reveal, the Deity. We are immersed in so thick an atmosphere steaming up from earth, that we cannot see the very sun from which that earth derives its life and light, and round which it revolves.

Nay, even suppose that some few rays of light gleam in upon us and excite some momentary warmth, and that *when* we think of God we feel some interest in Him, still I must ask, how much, how often, how deeply, do men really think of God and feel this interest in Him? Do they not "hear and talk of Religion," (to use the words of Jeremy Taylor,) "but as of a dream, and does not Religion make such impression as is the conversation of a Dreamer, whence they awake to the business of the world?" Have our religious thoughts the life the force the interest which is possessed by the slightest circumstances that affect our personal, our social, our political well-being? What, I would ask of many of my readers, has been the amount of Influence upon you exercised by the Idea of God in any given day or week; through all the hours and minutes of which you have been held in life by God, fed by God, blessed by God, have lived and moved and had your being in God? How much have you

cared about his approbation? How much have you implored his mercy, entreated his help, laboured in his service, and been zealous for his honour? What in short has been your interest for God, *as compared with* that which you have experienced for the community of which you are members, for the friends whom you esteem, for the wife and children whom you love, or for your Self, which is yet dearer to you than them all? I address the general class of decent, reputable, well-disposed, professedly Christian persons, and I pray them to examine—as before the heart-searching God who knoweth all things—whether they be not habitually, whatever their occasional thoughts and feelings of Religion, indifferent to God?—whether therefore they do not need a new impulse in their heart, a new life in their soul, an awaking as from sleep, a resurrection as from the dead, a new birth into a new world, with new perceptions, anxieties, desires, efforts, and pursuits? Oh the awful danger of dreaming listlessly through life without religion—or *about* religion! Only start into the consciousness that you are indeed dreaming (he is very near to waking who is conscious that he dreams), only turn not drowsily away from the friendly call of God, and you shall “awake and arise from the dead and Christ shall give you light.”

This is the point to which all men must be brought

if they would be saved:—they must have *their attention awakened to God*; they must have their eyes unclosed to look upon Him, their ears unstopped to listen to Him, their heart opened to attend to the things that are spoken of Him. This is the first step towards Piety. Till God has gained our attention He has gained nothing,—nor have we gained anything. Without this opening of the heart it is vain to have been consecrated to God's service by the Sacrament of Baptism, and thus to be inscribed and recognized among the number of His “called” ones. The Jews were thus consecrated, but still God cast them from Him as an unclean thing. They were thus His *called* ones, but they were not ultimately *chosen* by Him; and in them therefore do we see the appalling truth of that general proposition which applies equally to us—“Many are called, but few are chosen.”

Without this opening of the heart, it is vain to trust in the fact that we are members of a Christian church, however apostolical; and subscribers to a Christian creed, however pure; and entitled to Christian ordinances, however scriptural. The Jews too “rested in the law” (reposed themselves in satisfied assurance on the favours God had shown them), “and made their boast of God.” But that very law condemned them, and those very privileges,—because trusted in presumptuously as

*ends*, instead of being used conscientiously as *means*, —brought shame and ruin on them.

Without this opening of the heart, it is vain to have applied our understanding to the truths which have been taught us as baptized disciples of the Lord. For the Jews too “knew God’s will, and approved the things that were excellent being instructed out of the law, and were confident that they exclusively were guides of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes, having the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law;”—and yet the God of this world blinded their eyes, and the Gospel was hid from them and they were lost!

Nay, without this opening of the heart, it were vain to have a zeal for Christianity, an interest for its defence or its establishment and propagation. For the Jews too had this interest for Judaism. They had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge; and therefore “being ignorant of God’s righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God.”

*Attention* therefore to God is something more than this. Nay, not merely *more* (for it is not by *accumulation* merely that we grow in piety as we may in worldly wealth) but something *different* and of another *kind*. It is different from assent to



truth, from understanding of truth, from zeal for truth. It is the *personal embracing* of truth,—the pressing it to our bosom and taking it into our heart, the inhaling it as the breath of a new and higher life which *by* it begins to play within the soul. It is a waking up of mind which can never be described in words, but can only be illustrated by reference to analogous experiences. Who knows not the difference between *seeing* objects and *paying attention* to them? Nay, between attending to objects and being *personally interested* in them? Nay, between being interested in them as *means*, and absorbed in them as *ends*? It has even become proverbial to speak of seeing and yet not seeing; hearing and yet not hearing; because there may be perception without *remarking* and taking notice of; that is, without a *consciousness* of the perceptive act, accompanying the perception and associating it with other thoughts, and thereby giving to it relation and place in our memory. Now, such a *noticing* of religious truths is the first act of a real attention. And the second is, a *personal interest* in them; that is, not merely a noticing and thereby knowing them; but a noticing them *with reference to ourselves*—our state of mind, our previously existing wants and wishes, to which we find them applicable and to which therefore we apply them. You go into a repository of various goods; you cast

a vacant glance around upon the articles that it contains ; but your *attention* is arrested by something which "*strikes you*" as the phrase is,—that is, which falls in with some existing train of thought or feeling or desire in your mind,—which therefore you say, *suits you*, will do for you, "*answers*" to the secret demand within you. And so it is with Religion. We attend to truths as we find them *suitable* to some existing want of our soul: we welcome them because they *answer* to the cravings of the inner man. O that we knew more of those wants ! O that we felt more strongly those cravings ! So would every thought and word of Scripture be a-glow with interest to us—"more to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold ; sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb." It has happened to myself," says a Clergyman, "that a parishioner who suddenly became ill without hope of recovery, confessed 'I know no more of these things than a child.' I answered, 'Why, you have regularly come to church, and I have spoken plainly enough to you and you seemed to listen.'—'Yes, Sir ; and if you were to speak the same words *now* I should understand them ; but *it is one thing to listen, and another to heed* : I *wish* to understand you *now*.'"—God grant to us this *wish* !

But this is not all which is included in our *attending to* the things of God. For attention is

then first complete when it is absorbed by *the objects themselves* to which it may be turned ; when we do not merely catch at them in our progress towards some farther end, as means that may conduce to its attainment ; but when we *pause* upon them *for their own sake*, as an end gained, a truth discovered, a treasure found, which fixes every thought and satisfies every desire. Whence it results, that where there is the most intense Attention there is often the least Recollection ; because Recollection depends upon our linking-on the new conceptions which present themselves, to others by which they are surrounded or preceded or followed ; while Attention, in its fulness, sees only one object—is occupied exclusively with one single mass of thought, into which the spirit passes and becomes absorbed. This is that rapt Attention which the Psalmist speaks of when he says, “ I opened my mouth and drew in my breath, for my delight was in thy commandments.”

And this then is the Attention which Religion deserves and demands. Not mere assent to certain truths, but the *moving of the spirit towards those truths* as bearing on our everlasting welfare. Not an outward perception only but an inward Awakening ; not an approval only but a love ; not a contemplative judgment merely but a stirring energizing work within the soul, which rouses the

conceptions into new activity, throws them into new associations, fuses them into new masses. Indifference passing onward into Earnestness. Cold presumption melting down into fervent anxiety. Unfounded expectation becoming dashed with reasonable fears. The general ideas of God, and Christ, and sinfulness, and danger, and pardon, and obedience, and heaven, and hell, brought into particular relation to our Self—our own individual being—and assuming thus a magnitude a reality and a solemnity they never had before. God, in a word, confronted with our soul ; and therefore our relation to Him, dependence on Him obligations negligences and rebellions towards Him—our whole dissimilarity from his tremendous Majesty and Holiness—flashing on us in a light, bright as the Sun at noon-day ; and revealing to us at the same time the imperative necessity of some *personal transaction* between us and Him in order to our safety and our peace. And herewith therefore the springing up of thoughts we never knew before ; the opening of a prospect into which we never hitherto had looked ; the sinking of the present and the palpable before the mighty forms of spiritual objects looming in the awful distance ; the throwing forth the spirit out of one world into another ; the passing onward into a new hemisphere lighted by new stars, and bright with fruits and flowers before unknown.

And how then shall such attention be awakened ? Whence shall we derive this new impulse towards religious truth ? The Scripture answer is—*This is the work of God.* For the human heart is a great mystery. It is undergoing constantly innumerable changes which we cannot fathom, still less can of ourselves alone produce or control. We feel, in meditating on it, as we should in looking out upon the vast expanse and never-ceasing flow of ocean ; whose winds and tides and currents, we know to be not entirely fortuitous but subjected to law ; and yet to which *our* influence extends not, and of which we can avail ourselves only by a watchful skill. Much may be done by seizing on and improving occasions, but nothing to produce them. And just similarly,—who has *absolute* power over the human mind ? Who can discover the secret causes of its ever-changing tides of feeling ? Who can trace the various currents of its thoughts ? Who can “gather in his fists” the winds that sweep across its bosom ? Who can say to its troubled billows “Thus far shalt thou go but no further ; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed ?” Alas ! it is deceitful above all things,—who can know it but the all-wise God ? It is fluctuating and unmanageable,—who can rule it but the All-powerful God ? “The way of man is not in himself ; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” “The

preparations of the heart in man and the answer of the tongue are from **THE LORD.**"

And therefore all Awakening of the attention to Religion,—all "opening of the heart," to use the language of the Bible,—all "effectual Calling," to employ the phrase of technical Theology,—is in Scripture constantly ascribed to God. It was "*the Lord*" who "opened the heart of Lydia that she attended to the things that were spoken by Paul." Acts xvi. 14. It was because "the hand of *the Lord* was with the men of Cyprus and Cyrene" that "a great number believed and turned unto the Lord." Acts xi. 21. "No man cometh unto me," says Jesus, "except *the Father* which hath sent me draw him; for it is written in the prophets, They shall be all taught of *God*; every man therefore that hath heard and learned of *the Father* cometh unto me." John vi. 44, 45. "Who then is Paul," asks the Apostle, "and who is Apollos, but ministers" (agents and instruments) "by whom ye believed, even as *the Lord* gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but *God* gave the increase." 1 Cor. iii. 5, 6. "God," he says again, "hath called you unto the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ our Lord." 1 Cor. i. 9. "For ye see your calling, Brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, have called you, but *God* hath chosen the

foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and *God* hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty—that no flesh should glory in his presence ; for *of Him* are ye in Christ Jesus, who *of God* is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, that, according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in *the Lord*.” 1 Cor. i. 26—31.

And this divine origination of all Attention to Religion, is strongly intimated in the very phrase which is so frequently used for it in Scripture, and which occurs in the latter passages just quoted where this influence on the hitherto indifferent heart is termed a “ *Calling* ;” and God is said to “ *call* ” men to himself. For “ to call ” a person, in Scripture language, is not only (in the first place) To address ourselves to him ; to call forth his notice of us ; as when God complains by Jeremiah, “ I spoke unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not ; and I *called* you, but ye answered not.” Nor is it only (in the second place) To call into our presence and society—to summon and invite to us ; as the king “ *called* ” his servants to him and delivered unto them his goods ; and the guests were “ *called* ” to the marriage supper. But it expresses (in the third place) To call out, call forth, select, bring near to us by authoritative influence ; as when God says of Israel, “ I have *taken* thee from the ends of the

earth, and *called* thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant, I have *chosen* thee."

In all which senses God calls every reader of these pages to give himself to Him. Do you look upon the solid earth on which you tread, and feel it to be the representative and work of Unseen Might? Do you trace from link to link the ever-lengthening train of causes and effects which nature presents to you, and irresistibly conclude that still there must be One Cause more beyond them all? Do you consider the heavens the work of God's fingers, the moon and the stars which He has ordained, till their very silence becomes vocal to you, and you hear them "singing as they shine, The hand that made us is divine?"—In all these works of God there is a *call* for your attention to his being, to his wisdom, to his eternal power and Godhead.

And are you enjoying manifold privileges of instruction, worship, and church-fellowship,—the knowledge of God's word, the invitations of his Gospel, the open access to his throne of grace? These are *calls* of God to his gracious presence; these bring you into the atmosphere of his Spirit. And it is by the use of these privileges and the inhaling, through them, of this Spirit, that you may be rendered sensitive to that inward *Call* which shall arrest your very soul, and draw forth all its



best affections towards your heavenly Father. O if we should *neglect* these gentle assiduities of our God! O if after all that he has spoken to us by his Works, his Providences, his Word, his Church, his own beloved Son, we should still be "dull of hearing!"—we should doze and dream on in the torpor of Indifference till "the great cry" shall be made, "The Bridegroom cometh;" and we start up from sleep—*too late!* Awake *now*, thou sleeper, and call upon thy God! HE calls to you. Call you to Him! His voice now sounds to you the tender note of Invitation. O may yours respond in that of reverent attention, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth!" Let no man obstinately say, "It is *God's* work, this awakening, and therefore I must leave it to him." Say rather, "It is God's work, and *therefore* I will seek it from him!" All our encouragement and hope lies in this assurance that "He giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." *God's* work it is most truly, but not the less is it *man's* work too. For this (like all his operations, in nature providence and grace) is effected by Him not *without* but *with*, the subject on which he works; not without but with, the various human means that influence the mind;—those means furnished by Himself, adapted by Himself to the intended end, and constituted by Himself to be sufficient for that end. And such means are at this

moment before you and around you and within you. It is *God* who has presented these thoughts to your mind this day ; it is *God* who is by them moving various feelings in your heart ; it is *God* whose Spirit is this moment wrestling with your reluctance, and urging you to awake and arise and pray ; and whispering to you, so earnestly though gently, "Turn you to your God !" — O God, *may* each Reader of these pages turn to thee ! Do *Thou* open his heart to attend to the things that have been spoken in them ! Do Thou so *call* to him, that he may answer with a newly-awakened earnestness, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do !"

## CHAPTER IV.

## SPIRITUAL ILLUMINATION.

THE first step in Religion is the Awakening of the Attention to the things of God. But this attention, by whatever circumstances roused, cannot be sustained but in proportion as we go on to the *Understanding* of those things. Feeling is a legitimate and essential means of determining the thoughts towards God ; but genuine Feeling can maintain its life and energy only as it is nourished by *increasing* thoughts. The Illumination of the Mind must both deepen and direct the Awakening of the Heart.

ILLUMINATION therefore is the next step in the Process of Development of the Spiritual Life which claims our attention. And this is so essential a preparative and part of Piety, that St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews uses the term to express the whole work of Conversion—"after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions ;" and the Scriptures generally, express both the substance of Christianity and the experience of it, by the term

“light.” “Show forth,” says St. Peter, “the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” “Ye were sometimes,” says St. Paul, “darkness, but now are ye light, in the Lord; walk as children of light.” These passages (and many others) clearly showing that true Religion depends on new and constantly enlarging views of God and of his truth, and supplies a remedy for the Ignorance as well as the Indifference, of our fallen nature.

To be convinced of which let us consider first, that *There may be much ignorance of God even in the midst of outward advantages.*

Of this we have an instance in the case of the Apostle Paul before his conversion. He had enjoyed all the advantages which a Jew could possess towards knowing God, and with his characteristic energy he had improved those advantages to the utmost. “Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law a Pharisee;”—one of those therefore who “knew God’s will, and approved the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law, having the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law;”—nay, “profiting in the Jew’s religion above many his equals in his own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers.” And yet,

to this man we find Ananias sent by God, saying, "The God of our Fathers hath chosen thee that thou *shouldest know his will* and see that Just One and shouldest heard the voice of his mouth." And we find St. Paul himself, though he declared before his countrymen "I am verily a man which am a Jew, brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel and *taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers*, and was zealous towards God as ye all are this day;" yet, intimating in another place, to Timothy, that the only possible excuse for his resistance to the will of God as manifested by his Son was, that he did it "*ignorantly in unbelief.*"

We see then in this instance how great may be the darkness of the soul concerning God, even whilst the *understanding* has been carefully instructed in religion. We may know *about* God without knowing God. We may hear of him by the hearing of the ear, and yet our eye may not see him. There is a traditional knowledge of God as "the God of our fathers," which is not much more efficacious than that which even the Heathen enjoyed, who "*when they knew God* glorified him not as God neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened." It is like the knowledge that we may possess of our ancestors, —their names and relation to us and some dim tradition of their doings—as compared with that

which we enjoy of our immediate parents, whose sentiments and character are every day displayed to us. The Jews of old, with all their manifold advantages, were thus ignorant of God. "*Ye say, indeed,*" says Jesus to them, "*that He is your God ; yet ye have not known him :—he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.*" Too many, even of the early Christians also, blessed as they were with the fuller light which streamed from Christ, were thus ignorant of God. "They profess that they know God," says St. Paul, "but in works they deny him." And St. John solemnly warns all such self-deceivers, "He that saith I know God and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." O it is an awful thing to have the intellect enlightened while the heart remains dark and cold. To be familiar with the sound of truth, but never to have unclosed our eyes to look upon the very image of truth ! To be "groping at noon-day as the blind gropeth in darkness !" "This," says our Lord, "is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil !"

But more than this. There may be even some *practical* as well as theoretical knowledge of God, and yet this may extend only to some parts of his character, and still leave much darkness on the mind concerning its most essential features. St. Paul, be-

fore his conversion, was not like those worldly and ungodly Jews who shut out the truth by their unrighteousness. He could declare before them all, "I have lived in all good conscience before God unto this day," and assures Timothy that he "served God from his forefathers with a pure conscience." And yet this very Paul, as regarded the most essential attribute of God and the most important conceptions of His will, was dark and blind; so much so, that the knowledge which broke in upon him 'at his conversion he speaks of as a new revelation. Gal. i. 16. Never then let men be satisfied with dim conceptions of the character and will of God; with half-truths only in Religion. Happy indeed is the man who is *practically affected* by *any* thoughts of God, however obscure; far happier than he who with his understanding open has his heart still closed. An ignorant Piety is better than no Piety at all. A mistaken endeavour to please God is far superior to cold indifference to Him. But then, we must say this *comparatively* only, and with anxious fear for all who suffer themselves, with the true light shining round them, to close their eyes to better views of God. Paul does not the less *blame* himself for his former conduct, because of the ignorance which produced it. He does not the less exclaim, with all the self-aborrence of true penitence and its deep sense of guilt "I was a blasphemer and a persecutor and in-

jurious, yea the chief of sinners !” And alas ! therefore for any man who contents himself with fragmentary notions of God, as the God of Nature and of Providence and of Justice and of Law ; as the benevolent Benefactor and the righteous Governor and the protecting Patron of his fathers, and his fathers’ church—and sees him not as the *God of Grace* ; understands not his specific truth and will as manifested in his Son, and therefore “ being ignorant of God’s righteousness and going about to establish his own righteousness, does not submit himself to the righteousness of God.” O how much of reverence may there be for God, while yet it may be said of us as Jesus did of the Samaritans, “ Ye worship ye know not what ;” and Paul of the Athenians, “ As I passed by and beheld your devotions I found an altar with this inscription, To the unknown God : whom therefore ye *ignorantly* worship, him declare I unto you.”

Such then being the natural ignorance, both theoretical and practical, of God, which may exist notwithstanding manifold advantages ; let us consider in the second place, that *The removal of this Ignorance is essential to true Christian Piety*. Not indeed that the *existence* of Piety depends on the degree of distinctness with which we perceive the character of God. Very obscure conceptions may give birth to genuine devotion. But the *purity* and the *moral*



*influence* of Piety do depend upon the general light which may be thrown around that character, and the aspect which it presents to us. To love and serve God as we ought, we must know him as he is. "This," says our Lord, "is life eternal, to know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." All hope of eternal life and all fitness for its enjoyment, depend on our becoming acquainted with the Father as he is revealed to us by Christ ; for only such a revelation—the revelation of grace and truth—can win the affections and elevate the character.

For genuine Piety is not merely Reverence of certain unseen powers by which the world is actuated ; nor assent to certain historical facts which are reported to us ; nor obedience to certain rules of conduct which are imposed upon us by authority, or which commend themselves to us as profitable or rational or becoming ; but it is *the Exercise of the affections towards a personal Being*, and the elevation of the character by the influence of those affections into similarity with His. It is not mere belief *of* God, but belief *in* God ; that is, not merely belief of his Existence but reliance on his character. And when we keep this distinction in mind, how vain are all the objections urged about the impossibility of assenting to propositions which we do not fully comprehend ! It is not in *assent to propositions*, whether many or few

simple or abstruse, that saving Faith consists ; it is in *yielding up our confidence* to Him who makes those propositions ; the confidence being grounded upon *facts* (not speculations) which exhibit to us his character. Surely I might have—and ought to have—the fullest confidence in the dicta and directions of Newton upon any point of Practical Astronomy, though I might not understand, and therefore could not *intelligently* assent to, any one book of his Principia. We may *know* God so as to confide in him and love him without being able to *understand* God. And so we must know God. For “with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness.” And the heart can repose its confidence in another only as it *knows* that other ; it can love only as it becomes acquainted with what is loveable. A child who has been sent for education to a distant country, may have some natural reverence for the Father whom he knows to be at home, and some desire that the reports his Parent hears about him should be satisfactory ; but he can *love* that Father (that is, personal affections can spring up towards him) only as he comes to *know* that Father ; only as his Parent’s letters and communications unfold to him something of his character, and of his feeling towards himself ; or when at last, returning to the paternal home he is pressed to the paternal bosom, and feels for the first time in its fulness what it is to have a

Father, and to be a Son. And the reason why, with all that fear of the unseen and that reverence for the mysterious which must be allowed to be almost universal in mankind throughout all stages of their civilization, there is still so little practical influence of these feelings on the heart and life, is just because men *know not* Him before whom they tremble; they behold him not shining forth full-orbed in all the splendour of his perfect character as the Father of their spirits, the God whose very being is LOVE.

For who can love God while ignorant or mistrustful of God's love to him? Who can possess that spirit of filial confidence and joy and hope and buoyant energy, which is the proper spirit of Christian Piety, while his conscience is unpacified and his sense of alienation unremoved? We must in such a temper either boldly throw off our allegiance to God, or we must serve him by constraint and with a heavy heart. Is this last the case with any one who is now reading these lines? Are you well disposed towards religion, and yet find it wake no note of joy within your bosom? Are you a conscientious person, and yet sensible of a restraint, which keeps you at a distance from God! Are your very best feelings towards him more those of a Servant to his Master than of a Friend to his Benefactor, or a Son to his Father? Then do you not

need *Illumination*? Is there not something in the Idea of God to which you have not hitherto given heed? Is not the very key to his whole character still undiscovered by you? Can you say that you know God truly if you know him not as *your* God, your Friend and Father, to whom you can exclaim with David, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth whom I desire beside Thee?" Do you not need, in short, that the God of your fathers should be unveiled to you as he was to the Apostle Paul, "that you might *know his will*?" (Acts xxii. 14.) That you might know **HIS WILL**: this is what we need in order to a genuine Christian piety: not his works only; not his greatness and his power and his sovereign authority alone; not his general character of wisdom and benevolence merely; but "*his Will*," in that particular sense in which the term is used by Ananias to St. Paul, and by the Apostle himself in his epistles—His *gracious Will*, his purposes of condescending and forgiving love, his Will to save sinners and justify the ungodly and bless the undeserving and receive back to his arms the most desponding penitent who feels he is no longer worthy to be called his son, and comes to him crying "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee." That will which St. Paul extols to the Ephesians when he tells them "God has predestinated us unto the *adoption of*

*children* to himself according to the *good pleasure of His Will*, to the praise of the glory of his *grace* ;” and to the Galatians when he says that Jesus “ *gave himself for our sins*, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, *according to the Will of God* and our Father.” Such was the Illumination which St. Paul had need of, notwithstanding all his previous knowledge and conscientiousness and zeal, to render him a child of God indeed ; such did he receive when “ it pleased God who separated him from his mother’s womb, and called him by his grace, to reveal his Son in him ;” and such do we need also, such we must by similar means receive, if we would rise into the faith the love the dignity and the devotedness of Christian men. O indeed we need it ! Far more, all of us, than we have yet attained to ! With far more comprehension of the breadth and length and depth and height of that love of Christ which passeth knowledge, if we would be filled with all the fulness of God !

And *how* then, let us thirdly ask, is this removal of our natural ignorance of God, this Illumination of the mind so essential to the first upspringing of filial Piety in the heart, *to be effected* ? In proportion, I reply, as we contemplate that full manifestation of God which has been vouchsafed to us in his own beloved Son, *Jesus Christ*. “ The God of our fathers hath chosen thee,” said Ananias to Saul,

that "thou shouldest know his will and *see that Just One*, and shouldst *hear the voice of his mouth*." He is the source of all true Illumination. From his countenance stream forth those rays of the Father's love, which fire the heart and melt the will of man. "As no man knoweth the Son but the Father, so no man knoweth the Father but *the Son*, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him." Matt. xi. 27. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of *Jesus Christ*." 2 Cor. iv. 6. "No man hath seen God at any time; *the only-begotten Son* which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." John i. 18. "The Word was made flesh, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"—that is, radiant with just that peculiar splendour which constitutes the very being of God, the fullest truest most faithful *grace*, or love. John i. 14. I might refer you simply to the history of man to show you how, before the coming of Christ, this feature of the Father's character was dim and doubtful—how, among the benighted Heathen, fear made gods and cruelty invested them with attributes of fierceness and implacability—how, even among the Jews, though for the spiritual penitent there was many a ray of mildest pity gleaming through the

darkness and the tempest of Mount Sinai, yet the general aspect of the law-giving and law-avenging Jehovah, was austere and stern ; so that St. John declares "The law was given by Moses, but *grace and truth* came by Jesus Christ." But I would go farther than historical deduction, and assert broadly and beforehand, that it is not in Nature, in Events, or in Reason, to unveil to us with a certainty sufficient for our Peace and Hope, the Love of God towards man ; and that in the personal communications only which the Father has vouchsafed us *by his Son* can we truly know him as he is. What is called Natural Religion is indeed the ground-work of Christianity, but it can never be the substitute for it. It is the awaking of those feelings which prepare for, anticipate, nay demand, a Revelation from Heaven ; but so far from rendering such a Revelation unnecessary, so far from having the power of self-expansion so as of itself to grow up and unfold into Christianity, the very fact of its existence is just that which renders a Revelation indispensable as the supplement to its incipient but insufficient workings. The chaos of emotion which it stirs within the mind is just that which requires the influence of the informing Word of truth. *Because* darkness covers the face of the earth, and yet over that darkness the Spirit of life sits brooding, *therefore* God hath said "Let there be light!" The glimpses of the

Divine character afforded to mankind by Nature and Providence teach them indeed those preliminary lessons to which the fuller manifestations of Revelation are supplementary. But all the intimations of Nature and of Providence are dark, imperfect, perplexing, without the key which Christianity presents. They furnish the component letters of the Alphabet, but flung abroad without arrangement; and even when we laboriously collect these elements together and piece out with them some few words and sentences, we find that we have only just begun the language and got fragments only of the truths of God, and we instinctively cry out for *more*—more definite, more extensive, more systematic, revelations of his will. All we reach is mere conjecture; and only by the interpretation of the Author of these fragments, only by the plainer history of the *books* of God, can we make full sense of, even if we can at all decipher, the puzzling hieroglyphics on the vast and awful Pyramid of Nature, and the vague mysterious legends of Tradition.

Nay, yet more than this. Not only do the deductions of the understanding from the things and events around us, not tell us clearly of the fatherly character of God; but they tell us of the reverse. We learn from them not so much the truth of pardoning mercy, as of avenging justice. The world is full of punishment—prolonged and often inexorable



punishment. Almost every transgression and disobedience manifestly receives its just recompense of reward. Not only wilful but even involuntary and heedless infractions of the laws of Nature and society, are by the natural course of things continually bringing with them trouble, pain, disease, and death. The voice of God concerning transgression, if spoken forth at all in Nature, is a voice of severity and condemnation. As the thunders and lightnings of Mount Sinai were but one particular instance of those general tempests which so often rage in the natural world, so the denunciations of Mount Sinai were but a particular expression of the general truth which Nature is continually uttering, "God is a consuming fire." Even the seeming exceptions prove this. Even the temporary delays of punishment confirm this. Even the letting sinners have their own way for a season, only brings upon them more extensively the misery which is annexed to Sin. Punishment may let the Sinner get for a time the start, but with unwearied pertinacity does it track his steps, and springs upon him inevitably at last. "*The Lord is known by the judgment that he executeth* : the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands."

And O then blessed be God that "having in times past spoken to the fathers by the Prophets, he hath at last spoken unto us by his Son!" Blessed

be God that "the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, yea may be in him that is true"—enter into union and communion with the unseen Father—"through his Son Jesus Christ!" No longer need we now cry "Show us the Father," for "he that hath seen Jesus hath seen the Father." No longer need we doubt about the Father's compassion to every returning penitent, for this compassion Christ has manifested by accumulated proofs, in every possible way; by his teaching, by his character, by his words and deeds of never-wearied pity, and above all by his sacrificial and vicarious death. "In *this* was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God *sent his only-begotten Son into the world* that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our Sins." "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die; but God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners *Christ died for us!*"

## CHAPTER V.

## SPIRITUAL REGENERATION.

THE object of revelation is to meet the fallen condition of mankind in all its extent, and to bring back the soul in all its exercises to God. It applies itself therefore to the Heart, to remove its natural indifference to God ; and to the Understanding, to dispel its natural Ignorance concerning God ; but it stops not here, for this alone would leave untouched the main-spring of our nature, the deep and influential Will. This, alas ! is naturally *averse to God*. It grows up in us as a will of "the flesh," and therefore cannot but be contrary to Him who is Spirit, for "the flesh lusteth always against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh." And consequently all Attention to God's truth and Acquaintance with his character will but deepen our Aversion to Him, because it heightens our perception of the natural contrariety which exists between us, unless there come the influences of his Spirit to subdue that natural opposition, and by the seed of

the Divine Word to beget in us a love of God as our Father, and a will devoted to Him as our Friend. "That which is born of the flesh," says Jesus, "is flesh; and that only which is born of the Spirit is spirit; and therefore marvel not that I say unto you, Ye must be *born again*."

New birth then, or Regeneration,—that revolution in the will of man which makes him thenceforth breathe and act as a Son of God—this is the topic which now demands our meditation. May God enable us to derive from it personal improvement!

It will be my endeavour to show First, the *Nature* of this Regeneration; Secondly, the *Necessity* of our personal experience of it in order to Christian Piety; and Thirdly, the *Means* by which it is produced in the soul.

## SECTION I.

### THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL REGENERATION.

REGENERATION, in the sense which we are now considering, is The awakening in the soul of a *new Disposition towards God*—the Disposition of love, as opposed to our natural dread of Him; of confidence, as opposed to our natural mistrust of Him; of devotedness, as opposed to our natural resistance to His will; the Disposition, in short, of the return-

ing Prodigal towards his forgiving Father, *conscious* of the mercy which has been extended to him, the reconciliation effected, the thorough restoration to all that he had lost—and more than he had lost—so freely vouchsafed to him.

And it is this revolution in the *consciousness* in relation to God, this birth of a new *Disposition* towards him, taking place in the grown-up Christian, of which we have more immediately to treat.

There are indeed two senses of the term Regeneration which the Scriptures present to us, and which therefore are recognized by the ancient Fathers, by the Lutheran Reformers, and by the Church of England, both of which I think we must most carefully maintain, if we would not deny on the one hand what has been done *for us* before our consciousness, and on the other what must be experienced *by us* with our consciousness, touching our relation to God. As baptized Christians we have been brought into a *new Position* towards God, which constitutes our incipient Regeneration: but not the less for this (yea just so much the more, since to this very consummation has our Baptism pledged us) must we experience that *new Disposition* towards God, which constitutes our complete Regeneration. Into a *state* of Adoption we have been introduced by the application of Christ's atoning blood. Into the *sense* of this Adoption we must

be awakened by the inspiration of Christ's transforming Spirit.

Now, that the images of Birth, and New-birth or Regeneration, are fitly used to express our transference into a *state* of Adoption we have abundant testimony.

Even in common parlance we find many instances in which the term Regeneration is used to express *any marked transition from a state of evil to one of good*—as from slavery to liberty, and from misery to prosperity. Thus Josephus calls the restitution of the Jewish Commonwealth, when the Jews were brought back from Babylon, “the Regeneration of their fatherland.” \* And Cicero denominates his recall from banishment into his former dignity a “Regeneration.” † So the Latins call those “twice begotten” and “new-born” ‡ who pass from a mournful to a prosperous, from a worse into a better, state of things. And the same use of the phrase we find occurring in the East to this day. “We left Bokhara” (says Dr. Wolff, ii. 113), “amidst thousands of congratulating inhabitants, who called my liberation ‘a new birth.’” Whence that universal Restoration of all things to their primitive blessedness, that re-construction, and as it were new birth, of the world into its normal state, to which the Greek

\* Antiq. Jud. xi. 3—9.

† Ad Attic. vi. 6.

‡ Bis geniti; recens nati.

philosophy looked forward, was similarly denominated its "Regeneration."

But equally in Scripture language is this image of New-birth employed to designate a favourable change of state. Thus, God's deliverance of his people from the bondage of Egypt, and his forming them into a nation consecrated to himself, is called his *begetting* them, and his *creating* them. "Of the rock that *begat* thee," says Moses to the Israelites, "thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that *formed* thee." Deut. xxxii. 18. And by the prophet Isaiah, God thus addresses his people:—"Thus saith the Lord that *created* thee O Jacob, and he that *formed* thee O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine." Isaiah xliii. 1. And again,—"*Bring my sons* from far and *my daughters* from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by my name; for I have *created* him for my glory, I have *formed* him, yea I have *made* him." Isaiah xliii. 6, 7. And the final deliverance of the whole world from the bondage of the Evil one, the taking off the curse which sin has brought upon it, its putting on a new face and assuming a new character, is, from the same analogy, expressed in the same terms. "Behold," says the Lord by Isaiah, "*I create new heavens and a new earth*, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind; but be ye glad and

rejoice for ever in that which I *create*, for behold I *create* Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy." Isaiah lxx. 17, 18. "*In the Regeneration*," says our Lord to his disciples, referring to the same period, "when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matt. xix. 28.

And hence the farther application of these terms to denote a similar favourable change in *our religious condition*; especially the passing over from idolatry to the service of the true God, and the becoming thereby numbered among his people as partakers of his favour and protection. Of this we have an instance in the Eighty-seventh Psalm, in which the Psalmist, looking forward to the glorious things which had been promised concerning the city of God, exults in the expected influx of Proselytes from the neighbouring nations to swell the list of her citizens, and cries—I will enumerate the Egyptian and the Babylonian among the worshippers of Jehovah; I will speak of the Philistine and the Tyrian and the Ethiopian as "born" in the Holy City; for "of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was *born* in her; and the Highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people,\* that this man was born

\* Compare Ezekiel xiii. 9, where *excommunication* from the commonwealth of Israel is thus threatened—"Mine hand



there ;" i.e. when he makes up the list of his citizens he shall reckon among them as having all the privileges of birthright, many a Proselyte from heathen lands. Whence the Jewish Divines say that Abraham when he was called by God and cast off idolatry to serve him, became " a new creature ;" and speak of Proselytes as " born anew ;" " brought into the world a second time, and by another mother," and changed from " children of Satan into children of Abraham," entering thereby into new family relations, and new ties and duties towards a new community.

We need not wonder therefore at the similar use of these terms by our Lord and his Apostles to express the similar transition of the Hebrew convert from the Old law to a New one, and of the Gentile Proselyte from Heathenism to Christianity ; from their connexion with what St. Paul denominates " this present evil world " whether Jewish or Pagan,

shall be upon the prophets that see vanity and that divine lies : they shall *not be in the assembly of my people*, neither shall they be *written in the writing of the house of Israel*, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel." And Isaiah xliv. 5, where *reception* into this commonwealth is thus promised—" One shall say, I am the Lord's ; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob ; and another shall *subscribe with his hand unto the Lord*,"—he shall enter his name in the roll of my people,— " and shall surname himself by the name of Israel."

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into a new connexion with the community of Christian worshippers. This transition was avowed and witnessed before both the world and the church in the public solemnity of Baptism, which was the symbol of the convert's renunciation of the old family of his birth, and entrance as a new-born babe into the new family of his adoption ; of the blotting out his past existence and the commencing of a new one ; and which therefore is called by our Lord the "being born again of water," and by St. Paul "the washing of *Regeneration* ;" and is referred to by St. Peter as transferring its recipient from an old world into a new one, as completely as the waters of the flood transported Noah and his family from the wickedness and ruin of the ante-diluvian, to the renewed purity and the regenerated hopes of the post-diluvian, state of things. "Except a man be *born again* of water," said Jesus to Nicodemus (John iii. 5) ;—except he pass, not mentally only by private conviction of my being sent from God, but manifestly also by public avowal of his sentiments, into the number of my open followers, "he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "God," says St. Paul to Titus (iii. 5), "according to his mercy hath saved us,"—has transferred us out of the community of the "foolish, disobedient, deceived," &c. (verse 3), into the community of his saved ones ; has "justified" us (as it is in verse 7), and received us

into his favour and protection,—“by the washing of *Regeneration*.” “In the days of Noah,” says St. Peter (1 Peter iii. 20, 21), “few, that is eight souls were saved by water ;”—were rescued on the bosom of the flood from the ruin of the old world into the security of the new ;—“The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us,”—by water in like manner is *our* transition now effected from the world on which the curse of God is come, and which is ready to be burned (2 Peter iii. 10), into that little family of his delivered ones who have the promise and the hope of “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (2 Peter iii. 13.) What the writing of his name to the Mosaic covenant was to the Proselyte from Heathenism ; what the washing from the defilements of his birth was to the new-born infant ; what the water of the flood was to the rescued family of Noah ; that is Baptism to the Christian convert ; the method of *transition* into a new community—a new sphere of being—a new world.

Scripturally therefore, as well as by a just analogy, does the Christian church employ this term *Regeneration* to express the *new State of Adoption*, or admission into the favour and the family of God, to which we are introduced by Baptism ; our transference from being “children of wrath” to “children of grace.” Thus Justin Martyr, speaking of the

mode of dealing with converts in his time, says, "They are then led by us to a place where there is water, and are *regenerated* after the same manner that we ourselves have been regenerated. For they are *bathed and cleansed in the water* in the name of God the Father and Lord of all, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost." Whence the Lutheran Reformers remark, "Sometimes the word *Regeneration* is used for *Justification*; and then it means simply remission of sins, and adoption into the number of the Children of God. In which sense it is frequently employed in the Apology for our Confession, as for example where it is asserted that Justification is Regeneration. In like manner as the word to *make alive*" (compare Eph. ii. 1, 5) "is used to signify the remission of sins."\* To the same purport our English Reformer Wycliffe says, "In Baptism God christeneth the souls of men; that is to say, washeth their souls from the uncleanness of all sin." And again, "Bodily baptizing is a figure showing how man's soul should be baptized from sin. Bodily washing of a child is not the end of baptizing; but baptizing is a token of *washing of the soul from sin, both original and actual, by virtue taken of Christ's death.*" And this therefore is a prominent, though not the exclusive, sense which pervades the Articles and Liturgy of the Church of England.

\* Formula Concordiæ, p. 686.

“The idea which our Reformers entertained,” says Mr. Simeon, “was, That *the remission of our sins*, as well as the regeneration of our souls, is an attendant on the Baptismal rite.”\* We see this in the Twenty-seventh Article, where we read that “Baptism is a sign of Regeneration or New birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly *are grafted into the church*: the promises of *forgiveness of Sin*, and of our *adoption to be the Sons of God* by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed.” So also in the Baptismal service we pray “that this Infant coming to thy holy Baptism may receive *remission of his sins* by spiritual Regeneration;” and again, “Sanctify this water to the mystical *washing away of sin*;” and then we afterwards give thanks to God “that this child is regenerate and *grafted into the body of Christ’s Church*.” Whence, again, in the collect for Christmas Day we pray that “being regenerate and *made God’s children by adoption and grace*, we may daily be renewed by his Holy Spirit.”

Such then is the first sense of the term Regeneration; denoting our transference into a *state* of adoption—our being *new-born* from a condition of guilt and condemnation, to one of pardon acceptance and the hope of everlasting life; from being “without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of

\* Simeon’s Works, ii. 258.

Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world," to being "made nigh by the blood of Christ and reconciled to God by his cross." "With great clearness St. Paul intimates," says Archbishop Sumner, "that the Christians he addresses *were* regenerate, as having 'put off the old man with his deeds,' and having become the 'temple of the Holy Ghost,' and 'the members of Christ;' as having the 'spiritual circumcision,' and being 'buried with Christ in baptism;' Rom. vi. 3; Col. ii. 12; as having '*received the spirit of adoption*,' Rom. viii. 15; and as 'being washed, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' To the Galatians, 'bewitched,' as he says they were, 'that they should not obey the truth,' he still writes, 'Ye are *all the children of God* by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as *have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*.' Gal. iii. 26. These addresses and exhortations are founded on the principle that the Disciples, *by their dedication to God in Baptism*, had been *brought into a state of reconciliation* with Him, had been admitted to privileges which the Apostle calls upon them to improve. On the authority of this example, and of the undeniable practice of the first ages of Christianity, *our Church considers Baptism as conveying Regeneration*, instructing us to pray, before Baptism, that the infant 'may be born

*again*, and made an heir of everlasting salvation ; and to return thanks after baptism 'that it *hath* pleased God to *regenerate* the infant with his Holy Spirit, and receive him for his own child by adoption.'" \*

And recollect then Christian Reader, that this *new Position* towards God, *with all its attendant responsibility*, is yours. *You* have passed through this change of state. You have been transferred from the Court of the Gentiles into the Sanctuary of God. You have been dedicated in his temple and made holy to the Lord. The blood of the covenant has been sprinkled over you. The cross of Christ is on your brow. And the Sacramental oath of your allegiance to his name is registered on high. You are no longer your own. You are pledged and devoted as a follower of Jesus, "not to be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, but manfully to fight under his banner against sin the world and the devil ; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto your life's end." O what must be your condemnation if you become a deserter from his camp, a renegade to the faith you have been dedicated to, false to the oath that has been pronounced upon you ! "How shall you escape if you neglect so great salvation !" "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall you be thought worthy if

\* Sumner's "Apostolical Preaching."

you tread under foot the Son of God, and account *the blood of the Covenant wherewith you are sanctified* an unholy thing, and do despite unto the Spirit of grace!" O be what you profess! Realize what you are devoted to. Enter *consciously* into your sacred relation to Almighty God. Become *personally*—in disposition affections and hope—a member of Christ a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven!

For thus only will you realize the Second Sense in which Regeneration, or New Birth, is spoken of and demanded, both by Scripture and our Church. Namely, as that *New Disposition* towards God, that *Sense* of Adoption, which shews itself in all the exercises of filial Love to Him as reconciled to us in Christ.

For it is to the *actual consciousness* of such a new Disposition towards God that the Scripture writers would have us look, at each successive moment of our Spiritual life, as the only valid evidence of our *continuance* in God's favour, and of His seed *remaining* in us. No supposable past change is counted as of any avail to assure us of our present safety, except as we are finding in ourselves and are displaying to the world, the *practical evidence* of our being members of Christ and children of God. "If any man have not *the Spirit* of Christ," says St. Paul to the



Romans (viii. 9) "he is none of his." And this he says, remember, to persons already baptized, already spoken of by himself as "beloved of God, called to be saints" (i. 7); as "buried with Christ by baptism, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead they also should walk in newness of life." vi. 4. So again it is to *baptized* Corinthians, men of whom he had said, "Ye are washed ye are sanctified ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11), that he writes so solemnly, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; *prove your own selves*. Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, *except ye be reprobates?*" 2 Cor. xiii. 5. And just similarly he warns the Ephesian Christians, whom he had spoken of as "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," and "fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God" (ii. 10, 19), that they "put off concerning the former conversation the old man, and *be renewed in the Spirit of their mind*, and *put on the new man* which after God is *created* in righteousness and true holiness." iv. 22. Just as he says, again, to the Roman Christians, after having enlarged on the mercy they had obtained as "the remnant according to the election of grace," and as "grafted in among God's people" (xi. 5, 17, 30), "I beseech you, *therefore*, by these mercies of God" (so rapturously commemorated),

“that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be *transformed by the renewing of your mind*, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” xii. 1, 2. While every one knows the strong expressions of St. John concerning the necessity of our *realizing in present experience* the position into which we have been admitted by God’s free grace, if we would “know that we are of the truth, and would assure our hearts before Him.” The very same persons of whom he had said, “I write unto you, little children, because *your sins are forgiven you* for his name’s sake;” and again, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called *the Sons of God*;” and again, “Beloved, now *are we the Sons of God*” (1 John ii. 12; iii. 1, 2); he scruples not to warn, further on, “Whosoever doeth not righteousness *is not of God*,” and “whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,” and “*hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit* which he hath given us.”

All therefore, you see, is made to turn on the *present abiding Experience* of the *Spirit of Adoption*, the filial Disposition towards God, which constitutes the realizing of the privileges, the actualizing of the idea, conferred upon us in our Baptism.

We must have a *thorough personal Regeneration*. We must have "the Spirit of Adoption, crying in us, Abba, Father, and so bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." Rom. viii. 15, 16.

And what then are the marks and actings of this Spirit? What the main evidences of that *new Disposition* towards God, that life of God in the soul, without which none can be saved?

This question may be best answered by another. What are the marks of *Life* in any of its workings? physical Life—mental Life—moral Life? Are they not specially these two—*Sensibility* and *Activity*? And if so, must not the specific marks of this new *Life of God in the soul* which constitutes our Spiritual Regeneration be similarly a felt and manifested *Sensibility* and *Activity*, with reference to God?

And since this whole topic is one of *consciousness*, suffer me, instead of stating didactically these marks, to ask you to enquire of yourself experimentally, concerning your possession of them.

And first—what evidence have you of spiritual *Sensibility* with reference to God? that is, of a quick tender delicate susceptibility for the thought of God—the love of God—the enjoyment of God?

Is the *thought* of God pleasing to you? Does your heart leap up to welcome it? When you look at His works in nature; when you read of His

doings in providence ; when you gaze on the totality of His character in the face of His dear Son ; have you a sensibility for such manifestations ? Do you delight to dwell upon them ? to recall them ? to multiply them ? Can you say with the Psalmist, “ My meditation of Him is sweet ? ”

Then as to the *love* of God. Have you a sensibility to this ? You know what it is to be susceptible towards your friends ; you feel the charities of father son and brother ; you are quick to admire to esteem to love whatever is attractive grand and tender in human character. How fares it with the similar qualities in the character of God ? Wonder, adoration, gratitude, affection, devotedness—do you know anything of these emotions towards your heavenly Father ? “ We love him,” says St. John, “ because he first loved us.”

And have you, further, *enjoyment* in God—delight in Him as an object of complacency as well as of reverence ? Do you feel in His presence, and therefore in all the means which assist to make vivid to your mind that presence, in his word, his day, his house, his people, his worship, and his ministers, any thing of that enjoyment which in the book of Job is spoken of when it is said, “ Receive the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart, and then thou shalt have *delight* in the Almighty and lift up thy face unto God ? ” and

which the Psalmist breathes when he exclaims, "O God, thou art *my God*, early will I seek Thee ; my flesh longeth for Thee, to see thy power and thy glory so as I have seen Thee in the Sanctuary ; because *thy loving kindness is better than life itself*, my lips shall praise Thee !"

But this new Life of God within the soul will show itself, not merely in spiritual Sensibility, but in spiritual *Activity* with reference to God. The one would be a poor thing without the other. It would be but the sickly sentimentality of nervous sensitiveness. It might indicate some vitality, but not vigorous *Life*.

For true Life will display itself in Activity for *pleasing God*. How shall I use the powers which He has given me, so as best to satisfy the giver ? In what way shall I most enjoy his moral approbation, his complacency ? He has made me his child in Christ Jesus, he has forgiven me all my sins, he has supplied all my wants, he responds to all my anticipations ; what shall I render to the Lord for all the benefits that he hath done unto me ? how shall I walk so as to please my God ?

And what can this lead to but a corresponding Activity *to imitate God* ? For it is by becoming like him that we shall most effectually please him. The life that he has infused into us is the same life that displayed itself in his own beloved Son.

The Spirit of *Christ* is the Spirit of our Regeneration. And therefore it will show itself specially in this—in bringing us into conformity with the character of Christ; that as He was while on earth the image and glory of God, so we too should become the image and glory of Him. “He that saith he abideth in Him,” declares St. John, “ought himself also *so to walk even as He walked.*” And again, “Herein is our love made perfect,”—herein does it display itself as come to maturity in us,—“because *as He was so are we in this world.*”

And therefore finally, the life of God in us will assuredly manifest itself by an Activity to *glorify God*. For we cannot be the sons of God without a burning zeal for the honour of God. That which glowed in the heart of Jesus, the Son of God, will work in our heart too. We cannot rest without desiring and therefore labouring, that all should know Him who has been revealed to us; admire Him whom we admire; love Him whom we love; come into union with Him to whom we are united. “O taste and see,” cries the Psalmist, “that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him!” “That which we have seen and heard,” says the Apostle, “declare we unto you that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ!”

## SECTION II.

## THE NECESSITY OF SPIRITUAL REGENERATION.

SINCE Regeneration is the awakening in the soul of a filial Disposition towards God ; it follows necessarily, that some *personal consciousness of such a change must be experienced* by every mind which emerges from its natural indifference to God into the life of Love towards Him. Consciousness, I mean, not of the deeper movements whether sudden or gradual that have preceded it ; still-less of imagined throes of the New birth in its very act ; but of those *altered* and *altering* sentiments and dispositions, which are the *manifestations* of inward revolution, to ourselves and to the world ;—that consciousness which our Seventeenth Article calls “ *the feeling in ourselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and our earthly members, and drawing up our minds to high and heavenly things ;* ” and without which our Regeneration in any other sense does but deepen our responsibility, and must increase our condemnation.

This conscious Regeneration, then, we must assert to be absolutely *necessary* to our present Piety and our ultimate Salvation. For Piety is Friendship with God ; but the natural relation of man is that of contrariety to God ; and therefore till this contrariety be removed there can be no Piety. And Salvation is the perfecting of Friendship with God into complete Re-union with him. It is the unlimited enjoyment of God's presence ; and there can be no enjoyment of God's presence but by participation of God's character. And hence our Lord declares to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he *cannot* see the kingdom of God." Not, you observe, "he *shall not* ; but "he *cannot* ;"—in the nature of things it is impossible ; there is a *moral necessity* for his expulsion. None of the decrees of God are arbitrary. They are all decisions of the purest Reason, whose necessity commends itself to our own judgment, and wins from us whenever we consider the grounds of it our own assent. And therefore they are unchangeable ; therefore we cannot *conceive* them to be capable of giving way. Caprice may possibly yield to entreaty. Reason is eternally the same.

Consider then, I pray you, the *essential contrast* between the character of God and the native character of man, and you will yourself pronounce the absolute necessity of a personal change upon the



part of man. God is spirit; man is flesh. God is heavenly; man is earthly. God is pure and holy; man is corrupt and sinful. God is all majesty and glory; man is all meanness and shame. Two beings not different only but contrary; not merely with qualities disproportionate but those qualities excluding each the other. And what, then, if these two beings are to be brought into friendship? What, if man would enter into fellowship with God now, in order to enter into the kingdom of God hereafter? This cannot be while that contrariety remains. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" And what therefore must take place? There must be alteration on the one part or the other. One of the opposites must change. One party must give way. But can God change? Can He who is THE ROCK give way? Can the ETERNAL deny himself? Can He put off that nature without which he would not be God? Or can He lower himself beneath his nature? Can He accommodate his perfections to our sinfulness? Can He abate one atom of his spirituality — his purity — his consistency? The very thought were blasphemy! And what then must be done? Where must the change take place? In whom must the approximation be begun? I put it to your common sense; I put it to your moral judgment; What is the demand—the neces-

sary unavoidable demand—which the slightest consideration of the awful contrast between God and man forces home upon the mind? Is it not that of Jesus to Nicodemus? “Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Ye must be born again* :” a higher spirit must possess you—a new life must descend into you—you must die from sin and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying all your evil and corrupt affections and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.

Such a personal Regeneration, then, we must have—all of us—*either* by the gradual dawn of light upon the soul, stealing over its native darkness and disclosing new forms of truth and beauty to the wondering mind almost before we are conscious of its source; —*or* by the conscious spring of the awakened spirit out of a world of vain appearances into one of reality; from the delusive images and confused purposes and hurried efforts of an earthly dream, into the distinct ideas, the well-weighed resolutions, the vigorous movements of a new existence; wherein God himself shines out upon us, and all other objects, in *his light* being beheld assume their proper colour form and character. “The doctrine of Conversion,” says Dr. Paley, “we must preach plainly and directly to all those who, with the name indeed of Christians, have hitherto passed their lives without any internal religion whatever; who have not at all

thought upon the subject ; who, a few easy and customary forms excepted (and which with them are mere forms), cannot truly say of themselves that they have done one action which they would not have done equally if there had been no such thing as a God in the world ; or that they have ever sacrificed any passion any present enjoyment or even any inclination of their minds to the restraints and prohibitions of religion ; with whom, indeed, religious motives have not weighed a feather in the scale against interest or pleasure. To these it is utterly necessary that we preach conversion. At this day we have not Jews and Gentiles to preach to ; but these persons are really in as unconverted a state as any Jew or Gentile could be in our Saviour's time. They are no more Christians as to any actual benefit of Christianity to their souls, than the most hardened Jew or the most profligate Gentile was in the age of the Gospel. As to any difference at all in the two cases, the difference is all against them. These *must be converted before they can be saved*. The course of their thoughts must be changed, the very principles upon which they act must be changed. Considerations which never or which hardly ever entered into their minds, must deeply and perpetually engage them. Views and motives, which did not influence them at all, either as checks from doing evil or as inducements to do

good, must become the views and motives which they regularly consult, and by which they are guided : that is to say, there must be a revolution of principle : the visible conduct will follow the change ; but *there must be a revolution within.*"

And this "revolution within" has, therefore, been urged in all ages of the Church, and that too sometimes in the very terms "Regeneration" and "New Birth," as absolutely necessary to the personal fruition of our Adoption in Christ. St. Clement, for instance, employs the word "Regeneration" as equivalent to Repentance or conscious change of heart towards God. For having said in Chap. VII. of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, "Noah preached repentance," he repeats the declaration in Chap. IX. in these terms ; "Noah did, by his ministry preach *regeneration* to the world." And St. Augustine says very distinctly, on the First Epistle of St. John, "Behold, a man when baptized has received the sacrament of his nativity. He hath a sacrament, and a great sacrament ; divine, holy, ineffable. Consider what it is ; that it should even make a new man, by the remission of sins. Let him, however, *attend to his heart* : whether *that be there perfected* which has been done in his body. Let him see whether he has *Love*, and *then* let him say I have been *born of God*. If he hath it not, he hath indeed a character impressed upon him ; but he only wan-

ders about as a deserter. Let him have Love, otherwise let him not say that he has been born of God."

Again: "It is the Holy Ghost," says our Homily for Whitsunday, "and no other thing, that doth *quicken* the minds of men, *stirring up good and godly motions in their hearts* which are agreeable to the will and commandment of God, such as otherwise of their own crooked and perverse nature they should never have. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. As who should say, man of his own nature is fleshly and carnal, corrupt and naught, sinful and disobedient to God, without any spark of goodness in him, without any virtuous or godly motion, only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds. As for the works of the Spirit, the fruits of faith, charitable and godly motions, if he have any at all in him they proceed only of the Holy Ghost, who is the only worker of our sanctification and *maketh us new men in Christ Jesus*." "Such is the power of the Holy Ghost to *regenerate* men, and, as it were, to *bring them forth anew*, so that they shall be nothing like the men they were before." "If Nicodemus had known the great power of the Holy Ghost in this behalf, that it is he which inwardly worketh the *regeneration and new birth* of mankind, he would never have marvelled at Christ's words, but would rather take occasion thereby to praise and glorify God."

"Regeneration," says Dr. Barrow, "is a spiritual

change, effected by the influence of the Holy Spirit on the mind the will and the affections of *an adult sinner.*" And these operations "do constitute and accomplish that work which is styled the *Regeneration, renovation, vivification, new creation, resurrection,* of man; the faculties of our souls being so improved that we become, as it were, other men thereby; able and apt to do that for which before we were altogether indisposed and unfit." Again, "That renovation of our nature and qualifying our minds, as the Gospel prescribeth and requireth, is called *Regeneration*, a new creation, a new birth, the begetting a new man within us. 'If a man be not born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God.' In such terms is the effect of the Christian dispensation on our hearts and lives described; and that with the greatest reason; for no act of God towards us can be more fatherly than working in us by his grace *the principles of Christian life and the practices springing from it.*"

"When a man," says Bishop Beveridge, "believes in Christ the second Adam, and so is made a member of his body, he is quickened and animated by his Spirit, which being the principle of a new life in him, he thereby becomes a new creature, another kind of creature from what he was before, and therefore is properly said to be *born again*. His whole nature is changed. He hath a new set of thoughts and affec-

tions, a new sight and sense of God, a new bias upon his mind, so that he is now as much inclined to virtue as he was before to vice, and of a foolish proud sinful and carnal creature is become wise and humble and holy and spiritual."

"As," says Bishop Taylor, "in the superinducing our evil nature we were thrust forward by the world and the devil, by all objects from without and weakness from within; so in the curing it we are to be helped by God and his Holy Spirit. We must have a new nature put into us, which must be the principle of new counsels and better purposes, of holy actions and great devotion; and this nature is derived from God, and is a grace and a favour of heaven. The same Spirit that caused the Holy Jesus to be born after a new and strange manner, must also descend upon us and cause us to be born again, and to begin a new life upon the stock of a new nature. 'From him,' said Origen, 'it first began that a divine and human nature were weaved together, that the human nature by communication with the celestial may also become divine; not only in Jesus, but in all that first believe in him and then obey him, living such a life as Jesus taught.' And this is the sum total of the whole design; as we have lived to the flesh, so we must hereafter live to the Spirit: as our nature hath been flesh, not only in its original but in habits and affection, so our nature must be

spirit in habit and choice, in design and effectual prosecutions: for nothing can cure our old death but *this new birth*; and this is the recovery of our nature and the restitution of our hopes, and therefore the greatest joy of mankind. It is a fine thing to see the light of the sun, and it is pleasant to see the storm allayed and turned into a smooth sea; our eyes are pleased to see the earth begin to live, and to produce her little issues with parti-coloured coats; and nothing is so beauteous as to see a new birth in a childless family;—but all this is nothing to the excellences of *a new birth*;—to see the old man carried forth to funeral with the solemn tears of repentance, and buried in the grave of Jesus, and in his place *a new creation* to arise, a new heart, and a new understanding, and new affections, and excellent appetites:—*for nothing less than this can cure all the old distempers.*”

And how touchingly is this change described from actual experience in the words of one converted through the instrumentality of one of the Agents of the Church of England Scripture Readers' Association. (See their Journal for May 1854.) “It is impossible for me to tell you all I feel in the way of gratitude and comfort now that I can say with sincerity, ‘I was blind but now I see!’ And thanks be to God for his holy word, and to you for your kind instructions. In my leisure moments I often reflect



upon the change which has taken place in me. My temper, though worldly once, is now heavenly. When you first knew me I was the unhappy and willing dupe of passion and all that was bad, but thanks be to God I am now under the guidance of a better reason. The force of unholy passions swayed me then, the Bible is now my tutor. My appetites were then above me, I am now superior to them. My conscience has oftentimes been torn with remorse at the thought of a misspent life. Blessed be God it is now pacified by the peace-speaking blood of Jesus, and now I can repose by faith on his merits, his sacrifice, and his atonement. I once sought my happiness below, in the alehouse, the tavern, the company of wicked scoffers; but now I find it in a living Saviour; the foolishness of this world corrupted my manners, and its spirit tainted all my conversation; but I have done with all its sinful gratifications!"

This then must become the *personal experience* of each of us who are considering the momentous subject of this chapter. The *evil* of our characters is personal. The process of their transformation into *good* must be equally personal. Our *Indifference* to God is personal; therefore, so must be our awakening to attend to him. Our *Ignorance* of God is personal; therefore, so must be our Illumination to know him. And our natural *Alienation* from

God, yea Aversion to the thought of Him, is, alas ! most personal ; and, therefore, so must be our drawing towards Him, our seeking Him, our finding Him, our falling down before Him, our reconciliation to Him ; our trust in Him—that is, our Regeneration. We must enter into an entirely new relation of *our consciousness* towards God, so that He whom we have dreaded because of his tremendousness, and shrunk from because of his purity, aye, and disliked the very mention of his name because of a conscious contrariety to his will—even He—the same—the Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts that changeth not—shall be fled to by us as a Saviour, trusted in as a Friend, loved and clung to as a Father,—*our* Father reconciled to us in Christ. As the feelings of the prodigal towards his parent when he gathered all his goods together and took his journey into a far country to avoid his presence ; to the feelings of the same prodigal towards the same parent, when he came to himself and said, I will arise and go unto my Father, and when he felt that Father's arms around his neck, and received that Father's kiss of perfect reconciliation, and heard that Father say, Make merry and be glad for this my Son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found : such is the natural disposition towards God to that of our Regeneration : such is the transition from death to life, from the old man to the new,

which is denominated by the Scriptures, being "born again."

And would you see how thoroughly *personal* and *conscious* such a transition must be, observe what St. Peter says of it in his First Epistle (i. 14-25), when he is referring his readers to their own experience of this New Birth. Hearing, thinking, judging, embracing truth, are surely *personal* acts,—acts of *mind* which no man can do for us, and which cannot take place within us independent of our consciousness. And of these acts of *mind* St. Peter speaks when he reminds the converts that they had been "born again by the word of God, which word by the Gospel had been preached to them," and that they had "*obeyed the truth*,"—submitted their judgment and convictions to its influence. Feeling (again) is surely a *personal* act, an act of the *heart*, which, from its very nature, we cannot but be conscious of, which we possess only so far as we are conscious of it. And of such acts of *heart* St. Peter speaks when he declares that they "by Christ had *believed* in God," had reposed their trust and confidence in him as their Father : and had "put their *faith and hope* in God : " and had "*tasted* that the Lord is gracious," had found the truth of God's forgiving love as grateful to their spiritual sensibility as the sweetest milk is to the bodily palate of the new-born babe. Desire, (once more,) resolve, endeavour, are

surely *personal* acts—acts of *will*; the very experiences which constitute us *persons* at all in contradistinction to *things*, moving from an impulse within ourselves instead of being moved like the wind-tossed leaf or the floating weed by impulses without us. And of these acts of *will* St. Peter speaks when he exhorts them, “Therefore *laying aside* all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies and envies and all evil-speakings, *desire* the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby.” So evident indeed is all this, and so impossible is it to conceive a human being going through these changes of the character without reflection and emotion and determination,—by any other way than that of *personal* consciousness and interest and effort,—that the drawing out the proof of this might well seem superfluous if not absurd, were it not that no words can ever be too many, no efforts too assiduous, no reasoning too minute, when we are endeavouring to banish and drive away that fatal delusion, that worst form of Enthusiasm (though it claims the merit of horror at Enthusiasm), which dotes upon the fancy that men may be sanctified without knowing it, and saved without the trouble of it, and be literally *carried*, like passive infants, by the angels into Abraham’s bosom;—that, dozing listlessly for all their life in one state and that a state of irreligion,—they may nevertheless wake at last with glad surprise in another state

and that the state of glory—swept from destruction in a dream, and smuggled into heaven! May God deliver us from such Antinomian slumber, and startle us into new Spiritual life!

## SECTION III.

## THE MEANS OF SPIRITUAL REGENERATION.

SPIRITUAL Regeneration as a conscious experience, is the sense of love towards God. And the grand means of this experience is therefore that Exhibition of *God's love towards us* which is vouchsafed in the Gospel of Christ. For it is love that begets love. Love cannot exist alone. It must be reciprocal. And therefore our affection towards God must vary as our consciousness of the affection of God towards us. And this affection of God towards us is just the one great truth which is proclaimed in Christ. It is by manifesting this, that Christianity obtains a power over the hearts of men which no philosophy, no religion even, in its lower truths, can gain. And it is by commending this to the individual mind that the Spirit of Christ—which is emphatically “the Spirit of the Truth,” of this particular fundamental truth of God's saving love,—becomes the Spirit of *life*, and new-creates the soul. And this therefore is what St. Peter refers to, as the means and instrument of

Regeneration, in his First Epistle (i. 23), when he reminds his readers that they had been born again “not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by *the word of God* which liveth and abideth for ever.” And St. James also, in a very similar passage (i. 18-27), in which, having first laid down the general proposition that nothing but good can come from God, he adds as the most convincing proof of his goodness, “of his own will *begat* he us with *the word of truth*, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.”

For by referring to the context of the passage in St. Peter, we see at once what was in the mind of the Apostle when he used the phrase, “the word of God.” In the twenty-fifth verse he expressly explains his meaning: “*This* is the word”—this is what I am specially referring to by that term—“which *by the Gospel* is preached unto you.” And when, in verse twenty-two, he says, “ye have purified your souls in obeying *the truth*,” you will find from the preceding context that “the truth” which he has in view is that of Christ’s “redemption of them by his precious blood”—of his “manifestation in these last times for them”—of his death and resurrection and glory, accomplished for them “that their *faith and hope might be in God*.” Which truth he again distinguishes in chapter ii. 3, by saying, “ye have tasted that *the Lord is gracious*,”—that

is, have believed and felt that God is *forgiving and affectionate* towards you, so that coming unto him whom he has chosen and made precious you are made "a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices *acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*;" and "though in time past not a people yet are now the people of God; though ye had not obtained mercy yet now have *obtained mercy*."

And this specific use of the terms "the word of God," "the word," "the truth of the Gospel," to express the fundamental doctrine of this Gospel, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," is the prevailing one in Scripture. It speaks not, in those terms, of any particular words or writings—as we are too much accustomed to intend when we employ the phrase, as if the Spiritual life might be evoked by the *letter* of Scripture as by some cabalistic charm—but of the *truths* which formed the substance of the Apostolic writings and addresses, the *message* of which they were the ambassadors, the *disclosures* concerning God and his character and his feeling towards us and his doings for us, which were made by his beloved Son. It is not in *words*, but in "*the word*," not in the *terms* but in the *ideas* of Christianity, that its mighty power resides. When St. Paul reminds the Colossians (i. 5, 6) of "the hope laid up for them in



heaven, whereof they had heard before in *the word of the truth of the Gospel*," he immediately exchanges the latter phrase for an equivalent one which shows its definite meaning, "since the day ye heard it and knew *the grace of God in truth*;" that is, were made acquainted with that unadulterated message from on high, that *God is gracious and compassionate* through Christ. And when he desires that "*the peace of God* should rule in their hearts and they should be thankful"—that they should maintain a grateful confidence in him as their Father,—he exhorts them *in order to this*, as the proper nourishment of this, "to let *the word of Christ* dwell in them richly in all wisdom" (Col. iii. 15), to get deeply imbued with that grand truth in all its richness, which Christ has taught us, and which tells of Christ as our Reconciler with God. This truth is what St. Peter calls in another place, "the word of God" (Acts xv. 7); and St. Paul, "the word of God's grace" (Acts xx. 32); and "the word of Salvation" (Acts xiii. 26); and "the word of faith" (Romans x. 8); and "the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. v. 19); and "the good word of God" (Hebrews vi. 5.)

Which sense of the expression is evident, yet further, from the *effects* declared to result from the reception of this "word." "Ye have *purified your souls*," says the Apostle. "in obeying the truth,"—

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that is, have cleansed them from the defilement of an *evil conscience, afraid of God*. Which is the same result that is elsewhere ascribed to the reception of the fundamental truth of Christianity, reconciliation with God by the blood of Christ. “If the blood of bulls and of goats sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ *purge your conscience* from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. ix. 13, 14.) “Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance *of faith*, having *our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*. (Heb. x. 22.) That which is the effect of sin is reciprocally the cause of sin,—namely, the consciousness of disagreement and of distance between us and God. And nothing therefore will effectually do away with sin but that which does away with this cause of sin, and brings into its place the opposite consciousness of reconciliation and of nearness to God. Against this assurance no one can hold out. By the very proclamation of it the sinner is made to pause, and think, and relent. A man may doubt indeed the love of God to him—he may even hastily put from him an idea which aggravates his self-reproach—he may rudely rage against an influence which he feels to be unnerving his determination for evil;—but *he cannot look this winning truth directly in the face*; he cannot give it time to look him in the face in all the fulness of its radiance; and yet

hold on in obstinacy and rebellion. He begins to be affected by its secret fascination ; he feels the power of its spell ; he hesitates ; he turns ; his stubbornness is melting fast away ; and even as the Roman general before his mother's eye, "like a dull actor, he forgets his part" of proud impenitence "and he is out ;"—he yields ; he stoops ; he throws down the arms of his rebellion ; he "casts away his transgressions wherewith he has transgressed, and makes him a new heart and a new spirit ;" he flings from him his jealousies and cavils and murmurs and fears ; and he bows himself before the throne of the Redeemer in entire surrender to the *mighty gentleness* of God. "*The love of Christ constraineth him ;* and he judges that if one died for all, then they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again." And therefore he becomes *in Christ* a new creature ; old things pass away, all things become new. God has reconciled him to himself by Jesus Christ.

Thus then does "the word of God"—the glad tidings of reconciliation with Him by Jesus Christ—become the seed of our Regeneration. We are "born again," not by the *corruptible seed* of selfish calculations of expediency, of bodily impulses and fervours, of artificially excited feelings, of philosophical argumentation, and of dexterous persuasion,

—all which motives are but temporary and perishable, touch only the understanding and passions, stir only the upper surface of the mind, reach not down to the deep under-current of the will, and therefore can produce but superficial transient incomplete results—"not by corruptible seed, but by *incorruptible*," by that which has a never-dying vigour, and never becomes effete, even "the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." "Christ saith," writes Bishop Latimer, "'Except a man be born again from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' He must have Regeneration. And what is this regeneration? It is not to be christened in water, and nothing else. How is it to be expounded then? St. Peter sheweth that one place of Scripture declareth another. For, saith St. Peter, 'We be born again: '—How? Not by a mortal seed but by an immortal. What is this immortal seed? 'By the word of the living God,'—by the word of God preached and opened. *Thus cometh in our New birth.*" Just as St. Augustine says concerning the declaration of St. John, that every one who is born of God sinneth not because *his seed* remaineth in him, "He means the seed of God; that is, the word of God. Whence the Apostle says, I have begotten you *through the Gospel.*"

Such then are the Nature, the Necessity, and the

Means of Spiritual Regeneration. I cannot quit the subject without pressing on my readers a few words of Inquiry, of Direction, and of Encouragement.

Is not *Inquiry*, I would ask—personal inquiry of ourselves—pre-eminently necessary, after the consideration of a topic like this? It is not one of doubtful theory or curious investigation; it is one which concerns the very being of our piety and holiness. And can we then fail to turn round from it on ourselves, and ask with simple earnestness, Have *I* this indispensable new birth? I do not bid you point to any given *moment* of Spiritual birth. I do not ask for the chronology of Conversion. I do not even demand that the awakening of a filial disposition towards God should have been, in every case, marked enough to form an epoch in the life—though Dr. Paley hesitates not to say concerning those “who with the name of Christians have hitherto passed their lives without any internal religion,” that “no one can be saved without undergoing a conversion which he must necessarily both be sensible of at the time, and remember all his life afterward. It is too momentous an event ever to be forgot. A man might as easily forget his escape from a shipwreck.” But this I do ask—this I earnestly beseech you honestly to ask yourselves,—Have you *now*, at this moment,—whether its

development within you have been quick or slow, marked or unmarked—have you *now* that spirit of adoption which enables you to cry Abba, Father? Are you now at one with God? Is the thought of him delightful to you? Is his presence welcome; his will agreeable and such as you heartily accord with; his honour dear to you; his interest made your own; his Spirit dwelling in you? If not—*Where are you? What are you? What is your condition? your character? your hope? Where is the benefit of your Christian privileges and education? What have you gained from your baptismal consecration? Wherein have you realized the access to God laid open to you, nourished the Spirit of God vouchsafed to you, fulfilled the vows to God which are upon you? Oh there is nothing in all this of doubtful speculation, to entitle you to hold back from its consideration; nothing of mere conflict of opinion, to permit you to return yourself a party answer; the question touches your character, your soul, your salvation. It sets before you life or death, blessing or cursing, heaven or hell! Sweep from you, for the moment, every shadow of a difference of doctrine and of school and of expression, still the practical inquiry cannot be shaken off; it cleaves inseparably to your very self; it asks with pertinacious earnestness, What still am I—myself—in life and character, and heart—before the eye of God?*

Not, What are my opinions or the opinions of other men concerning me? Not, What is my standing in the church, my name my profession my reputation? But what am *I—myself*—before that heart-searching God with whom there is no respect of persons; and before whom not the hearers of the law are just, but the doers of the law—those who have the *work of the law written in their hearts*—shall be justified, in that day when God shall judge *the secrets of men* by Jesus Christ? This is my Inquiry. I pause—that up to God who seeth in secret, may be breathed in secret, by every one who reads it, the answer that his conscience dictates to its Judge!

But then, I pass on to a *Direction*, to such as can with trembling hope breathe this answer in the affirmative, and I remind them that just in the way in which their childlike state of mind towards God was first begotten in them it must be *nourished* from day to day. It is by “*the word of God*,” by what you have heard and meditated on and pressed home to your own necessities, concerning His forgiving love in Christ, that you have been awakened to any measure of love to Him in return; and therefore if you desire this love to grow—nay to maintain its life—within you, it must be nourished by daily feeding upon *that same word*; by the continual remembrance and re-application of that same truth. The life of *Regeneration* must pass on into

- that of daily *Renovation*. As you have begun you must go on. As you have been born you must grow. And this growth will form the only permanent and satisfactory evidence of that birth. As there cannot be growth in Holiness till the seed of Holiness has been quickened into life; so neither can this seed have been quickened if there be not growth. And therefore St. Peter writes; "*Seeing that ye have purified your souls by obeying the truth,—having been born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever*"—What then? What is the Apostle's conclusion from these premises? Is it—Therefore sit down satisfied that the work of Piety is done? Therefore point to the record of a past Experience as the earnest of salvation? Therefore cry, "Once a saint always a saint?" Therefore answer all the accusations of our conscience with those memorable words, 'Now I am safe, for I am sure that I was *once* in a state of grace?' O no! nothing of all this is the conclusion of St. Peter; but just the very reverse—"Therefore laying aside all malice and all guile, and hypocrisies and envies and all evil-speakings, as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word *that ye may grow thereby.*" What if indeed we are born again; we are but babes still; and we need continual nourishment by that same word which was



the means of our regeneration, that we may grow up into men. We have received but the seed of the divine life, and it requires unlimited development. We have but *tasted* of the graciousness of God, and we need to have it circulate through every vein and strengthen and consolidate every power of our being. Therefore “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*”

And would you have *Encouragement* for this? You find it in the very epithet applied by Peter to the seed of your regeneration. It is “*incorruptible.*” It does not spring up for a moment and then wither away. It has in it the principle of *life* and endless germination. It is capable of infinite development. It may expand, from being the least of all seeds, to grow into a tree “whose height shall reach to heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of the earth, the leaves thereof fair, and the fruit thereof very much.” “This is the comfort of the saints,” says Archbishop Leighton, “that though the life which God by His word hath breathed into their souls have many and strong enemies, such as they themselves could never hold out against, yet for his own glory and his promise sake, HE will maintain that life and bring it unto perfection.”

## CHAPTER VI.

## SPIRITUAL PEACE.

CHRISTIANITY is no system of mere restraint. It is no new scheme of police regulations. It comes not merely to denounce evil, and to reduce its followers to a negative orderliness. Its object is far higher than this; its benefit far more excellent. This had been already provided for by the *Law* of God; that Law which springs up from the very relations of things; is enforced by the significant though silent discipline of natural consequences; and was proclaimed in unequivocal statutes in the Mosaic covenant. And Christianity is no mere republication of this Law. It is the writing of it on the heart. It brings something *in addition to it* which changes its character and augments its influence; a Love by which it is cordially embraced; a Peace which renders its observance perfect freedom.

For though the Gospel is primarily the glad tidings of everlasting life, its message relates not only to the future. It bestows blessings in hand;

a foretaste and a pledge of those that are to come. It speaks of present pardon peace and favour. And therefore the spirit that it awakens is not a mere impatient expectation of a future inheritance, but is the quiet confidence of present right and title to that inheritance.

This is intimated by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans (chapter v.) when he declares that "being justified by faith," having entered into that new relation to God as our reconciled Father which the regenerate mind begins to recognize, "we have *peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ;" and by Him, moreover, enjoy a permanent state of "grace," or consciousness of the divine favour; and thus "not only rejoice in *hope* of the glory of God," but also "joy in *God himself*" as our present Friend and Father, "through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement." Which present benefit of the Gospel, St. John also speaks of when he says "Our *fellowship* is with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ; and these things write we unto you that your *Joy* may be full."

It is the privilege then of the converted man, who has been born again to the love of God, to derive from this new state of his consciousness towards his heavenly Father all the happiness which can result from the experience of communion, sympathy, and co-operation with a bosom Friend. De-

light in God's presence—Dependence on his care—Harmony with his will—these are the legitimate elements of Spiritual Peace.

Spiritual Peace results from *Delight in God's presence*. God is everywhere. He orders all things after the counsel of his own will. He worketh all in all. But the Christian convert, whose mind has been opened to the sight of spiritual things even as the eyes of Elijah's servant were opened to behold around him horses and chariots of fire, becomes continually *mindful* of this universal presence of his Father ; *recognizes* his hand in all the circumstances and events of life ; and refers up all effects to Him as their all-wise and all-gracious Cause. In the beauty and pomp of Nature, when it stretches out before his wondering gaze in boundless prospect or towers up above his head to inaccessible heights ; when it spreads over the unfathomable waters or looks down from the equally unfathomable sky ; when it blazes in the sunbeam or glows with milder splendour in the starry host ; in all this dread magnificence of Earth and Heaven, the believer can rejoice in God. To his eye "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work." To his mind "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof ; the world and all they that dwell therein." And he exclaims with adoration ever fresh and new—fresh and new with every

recurrence of the objects that excite it—"The day is thine, the night also is thine, thou hast prepared the light and the sun ; thou hast set all the borders of the earth ; thou hast made summer and winter,"—"O Lord, *our* Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth !"

And if in all things around him the Christian thus delights to recognize God, how much more in those which *personally concern him* ! God is not only *with* all things, but he blesses all things. He openeth his hand and filleth all things living with plenteousness. From him cometh down every good and perfect gift. This then the Christian recollects,—and delights in the recollection. All the comforts he enjoys convey to him a double gladness and with an emphasis of bliss are his, for with the gift he enjoys the Giver also. Things which in themselves are good, become to him inexpressibly more so as representatives of The Good One, and as pledges of his love. And thus, to such a state of mind, the earthly becomes the memorial of the heavenly ; the evanescent, of the permanent ; the incomplete, of the perfect ; the limited, of the absolute ; the manifold rills, of the one unfailing fountain ; the reflected rays, of the originating Sun. "Thou shalt remember *the Lord thy God*," says Moses, "for it is HE that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which

he sware unto thy fathers." "Thine O Lord," says David, "is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great and to give strength unto all. Now therefore O our God, *we thank Thee and praise Thy glorious name*, for all things come of *Thee*, and of *Thine own* have we given thee." This is the spirit which enables us truly to enjoy our various blessings—life, health, competence, recreations, friends; thankful for the greatest without being dependent on them; and deriving from the least a pleasure far above their own. See in them God's smile; hear in them God's voice; prize them as the tokens (the current tokens and no more, lest you assign to them intrinsic value) of God's sterling love!

For then you will be able to carry on your joy in God from the blessings even to the *seeming evils*, which he brings upon you. For if the character of everything depends, not on the gift itself but on the Giver and his intentions towards us, then may the Christian rejoice not only in the open but in the disguised gifts of God. A parent's love may be exercised (and often much more exercised) in

a reproving frown than in an encouraging smile ; in the discipline that pains and subdues than in the indulgence that gratifies and puffs up. And the gift of medicine the most nauseous may be a far more solid evidence of kindness to a diseased friend than that of all the sweets his morbid appetite may crave. "Open rebuke is better than secret" (that is, indolent and timid) "love: for faithful are the wounds of a friend." And what child of God may not rejoice in the wounds which he has received from his heavenly Friend ? may not regard them as the very choicest tokens of his love ? may not exclaim with David "It is good for me to have been afflicted ;" may not "glory even in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in his heart" (he is made conscious in the midst of all that God is gracious to him) "by the Holy Ghost which is given to him !" Only let us cultivate the habit of *recognizing God* in all things, (and this is Piety ; ) and then shall we assuredly *joy in God* in all things, (and this is Happiness.) Bright things will become more bright, and dark things will be made transparent. Even as the bursting of the sun upon a landscape, so is the lifting up the light of God's countenance upon the soul—every object is invested with

new form and colour and shines with hues from heaven.

But Spiritual Peace results further from *Dependence on God's care*. We are weak and ignorant and helpless; and therefore to a Friend we look, not for communion only, and the sweet intercourse of thoughts and words and gifts, but for advice, support, assistance. And herein consists the Christian's Peace, that he may look to God for this from day to day. That very inequality between himself and his heavenly Father which must render full communion impossible; that awful distance between the creature and the Creator which makes us reverently hesitate to call the Almighty One our *Friend*; this only *increases* the confidence with which we may depend upon Him as our *Guardian*. And in this exercise of absolute Dependence on his care lies our truest peace; a peace such as all the dreams of Independence which the fumes of Sin have ever generated in the fancy of poor fallen man could never, in their fullest realization, produce. For it is not dependence that is irksome; it is the feeling our *need* of dependence while we see not whom we can implicitly confide in. It is not want which is painful; it is the not knowing whence to get our wants supplied. It is not weakness that is miserable, either in doing or in suffering; it is the being compelled when weak to do and to suffer unpitied, un-



assisted and *alone*. What so delightful as the exercise of childlike confidence? What so blessed as the consciousness of knowing one in whom that confidence *may* be exercised unreservedly, in every circumstance and through every moment of our lives? Yet this is the privilege of the Christian—if he would but enter into it. This is that Peace which passeth understanding which the sense of God's unfailing help can give. Jesus himself enjoyed it when he said to his Father "I know that thou hearest me always." And he exhorts his followers to enjoy it when he says "Take no thought saying, What shall we eat, or What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed? *For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*" Paul felt it when he wrote "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound : everywhere and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." And when he could throw out those paradoxical assurances,—“We are troubled on every side yet not distressed ; we are perplexed but not in despair ; persecuted but not forsaken ; cast down but not destroyed.” And when he could exclaim, “He said unto me My grace is sufficient for thee ; for

my strength is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather *glory in my infirmities*, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore *I take pleasure* in infirmities, in reproaches in necessities in persecutions in distresses for Christ's sake ; for when I am weak then am I strong." And Paul exhorts *all* Christians to enter into this confiding peace, when he writes to the Philippians "Be careful for nothing ; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the *peace of God* which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Why, it is our need of help from God which affords us the occasion of rejoicing in his care ! Had not our conscience awoke to the misery and guilt of Sin, how could we joy in the Atonement which He has provided for sin ? Had we not girded ourselves to the tremendous conflict with our inbred corruptions, how could we joy in that grace by whose effectual help they may be put to death ? Did we not feel that we are strangers and pilgrims upon earth, how could we glory in the prospect of that better country and that city which hath foundations, which God has prepared for us ? In this our present fallen state, our deepest sense of evil is the mother of our highest good ; on the tears of our affliction is painted the rainbow of our hope ; and through

the gloom that gathers over the shows of earth we best can see the stars of heaven. Anything that bends us down into dependence is a blessing, for in Dependence lies our Peace.

But Spiritual Peace depends, still more, on our being *in harmony with God's will*. This is indispensable to solid Christian joy. It is only as we regard God as our *Friend* that we can delight in the recollection of His presence, and exercise dependence on His care ; and we can never regard God as entirely *our* Friend, so long as our conscience tells us that *we* are not friends, desire not to be friends, with Him. All true and lasting peace, all sober certainty of waking bliss, depends on the condition of our own minds, the moral harmony that reigns within ourselves. It is because this harmony has been disturbed that man is miserable. And it is only in proportion as it is restored that he can be happy. And it is because this harmony is restored in the converted man, because he has received into his soul that Spirit of holiness which brings his will into accordance with the will of God, that he can rejoice in God as now his Father indeed ; not in name and relation only, not by creation sustentation and daily benevolence merely, but as the Producer of a state of mind accordant with His own ; as having begotten us again of His own Spirit, and created us anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which He

had before ordained that we should walk in them. It is this *fellowship of inward will* that St. John especially refers to as the source of Christian joy. For he tells us, "if we say that we have fellowship with God and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." And again, "he that keepeth God's commandments dwelleth in him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us *by the spirit which He hath given us.*" And this therefore Jesus presses on his followers as the source of all true inward joy. "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. And these things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that *your joy might be full.*" And so felt St. Paul; "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." O it is indeed a peace that passeth understanding to feel, with all the wondering gratitude of conscious integrity, that we *have* taken God's will for our own, and that amidst our frequent infirmities and neglects and treacheries we do desire and endeavour to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; we do approve of God's law as holy just

and good; admiring and loving it; co-operating with it; rejoicing in its partial fulfilment in ourselves and others now; and looking forward with a hopeful zeal to that predicted time when it shall be entirely fulfilled by all; when God's will shall be done in earth even as it is in heaven! What so exhilarates the heart as the assurance that we are truly at one with a bosom friend; that his confidence in us is not misplaced, that his affection towards us is returned, that there exist no private views and purposes in either mind, that we are together pursuing the same end, pleased with the same enjoyments, imbued with the same tastes, working out together the same results? And what then is it to be conscious that in some degree this fellowship exists with the Most High God; with the sentiments of the Most Holy; the purposes of the Most Wise; the workings of the Most Mighty; the honour and ultimate triumph of the Most Glorious; the King of kings and Lord of lords! The greatest blessedness that can be attained by mortal man is told in Scripture by one word; the greatest reward that can be given to the most devoted fidelity is assigned in a single syllable; and that is just the word and syllable which expresses all the peace we have been speaking of—"Abraham believed in God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness and *he was called the FRIEND of God.*" "Ye are my *Friends*, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

Would you then, dear Reader, enjoy this friendship with God and all the peace which it produces, suffer me to remind you how this privilege was gained for you, and how it must be realized within you.

*How it was gained for you.* For it is written, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God, *through our Lord Jesus Christ*;" and again, "We joy in God *through our Lord Jesus Christ*, by whom we have received *the atonement*." This privilege then is not ours by birthright. It comes not of itself to us. It cannot be solicited for us by our fellow men. We cannot purchase it ourselves. Nor does it grow up in us by spontaneous development. No human heart is naturally friendly with the High and Holy One. As well might the out-cast beggar aspire to friendship with the crowned monarch; or the condemned felon feel familiar with the robed man of justice; or the conscience-stricken murderer delight in the thought of him whose name he had put out from the earth. Nature, history, philosophy, Scripture, conscience, all declare that enmity, variance, suspicion, dread, are and must be the natural emotions of a guilty spirit toward its offended Maker Governor and Judge. And therefore to be friends with God we must become *reconciled to Him*. We must be *made at one*, before we can feel and love as one. The past must be

settled before the future can be enjoyed. We must be brought into agreement before we can walk together. And just in order to this reconciliation, this at-one-ment, this making up, this bringing to agreement, God sent his only Son into the world to be the Mediator, the Restorer, the At-one-Maker, (as Tyndal calls him) the mutual interceding Friend.\* "God was in Christ," says St. Paul, "reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of Reconciliation. Now then as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us we pray you in Christ's stead, *be ye reconciled to God.*" God has done everything on his part towards a reconciliation. Now do you do yours. God has made the first offers; has thrown down the existing barriers; has provided the necessary pledges; has condescended to the most encouraging assurances; has not spared his own Son but has given him up for us all; has opened wide his fatherly arms for

\* Whence To atone or *make at one*, is to *reconcile* two parties :

"My prayers, my tears, my spirit-stirring grones  
Durst not presume to take their flight to Thee;  
But that thy Sonne, who *thee and man attones*  
Invites all burdened souls to come to Thee."

*Ancient Devotional Poetry, published by the Religious Tract Society, No. LIV.*

every returning sinner ; and cries to all " Return to me for I have redeemed thee ! " Now then, *do you return*. " Take with you words and turn unto the Lord and say unto him, Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously." Lay your hand on the atonement which has been sacrificed for you. Transfer upon his head your guilt. Sprinkle on your conscience his blood. And draw near to God with a true heart, in full assurance of faith ; that being justified by faith you may have peace with God through Jesus Christ your Lord !

And thus shall you *realize in your mind* the privilege which has been vouchsafed you through his blood. You will *receive* the atonement which has been wrought for you. You will enjoy *personally* what has been done for you *vicariously*. You will be yourself *at one* with God, and will joy in Him who is not now first by some tedious process of laborious penance to be *made* your *Friend*, but who *is* already so, and has *shown himself* to be so through his Son ; and by that showing has subdued and won your heart ; and with your heart will have your diligent obedience—will he not ?—from this time forward even to eternity !



## CHAPTER VII.

## SPIRITUAL HOPE.

THE grand promise of the Gospel is that of the perfectionment of all things in the kingdom of God. And the whole work of the Gospel on the individual soul is the bringing it out of the degradation of sin into a capacity for this glorious consummation. The Son of God has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. And the Spirit of God disposes trains and fits them for its ultimate enjoyment. The Doctrines of Christianity make known this kingdom and the way in which it must be sought. The Experience of Christianity anticipates this kingdom, and brings the mind to live by faith in some communion with it. And the Precepts of Christianity prepare for this kingdom, and reduce the character into conformity with its governing principle, the will of God.

All genuine Christian Experience therefore springs from the promise, and depends upon the hope, of everlasting life. The whole work of deliverance from evil is begun continued and ended in hope.

“We are saved” says St. Paul “by Hope.” That is, Hope forms the living principle of the Christian mind, begetting and sustaining its spiritual exercises. It was the hope of pardon through the blood of Christ, which first delivered us from this present evil world. It is the hope of victory through the Spirit of Christ, which animates us to struggle for deliverance from the still remaining power of sin. And it is the hope of final triumph at the second coming of Christ, which enables us patiently to wait for the deliverance of all things from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Hope then, is the crowning element of the Spiritual Life—that which breathes over every other element a freshness and a fragrance ever new. O may the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may *abound in Hope* through the power of the Holy Ghost!

For Hope is the only stable support of the Christian in this present state of things. Great and manifold, it is true, are the blessings which God vouchsafes even now to them that love him. In the remembrance of past compassion and in the enjoyment of present communion, there springs up frequently in the bosom of the Christian a joy which no man intermeddleth with; according to the promise of our Saviour, He that believeth on me, from his own heart shall well forth constantly refreshing

streams of gladness. But then all these blessings, in the present state of things, are necessarily incomplete unstable and disturbed. The pure river of water of life may proceed out of the throne of God in the heart, clear as crystal, but it flows into a mind still turbid, and therefore it unavoidably becomes defiled.

Our *knowledge of God*, for example, how limited is this! He has proclaimed his character to us, but we are dull of hearing. He has made himself visible in Christ, but our eyes are heavy. When indeed we *can* fix our gaze on his perfections, when we *can* look forth full upon our God, his will his works his ways, with quiet contemplation, then do we understand somewhat of our Lord's assurance that this is life eternal, to know the only true God through Jesus Christ whom he has sent; and we are ready to exclaim with the disciples when they saw the glory of their Master, "It is good for us to be here!" But alas, how soon does a cloud overshadow us, and we awake and find ourselves alone! That pure intuition of Deity which the sages of antiquity aspired to as the summit of perfection; which Moses the *sacred* sage was favoured with when "God spake to him mouth to mouth, even apparently, and the similitude of the Lord did he behold;" and the full reality of which is the exclusive portion of the only-begotten Son, to whom the Father "showeth

all things that himself doeth" and who therefore "knoweth the Father even as the Father knoweth the Son:"—this is not for ordinary flesh and blood in this world of sense and sensible conceptions; and by Hope alone can we look out for any approximation to it. But Hope does tell us that "the pure in heart shall see God;" that we shall behold his face in righteousness;" that "we shall see him as he is;" that "now indeed we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now we know in part, but then shall we know *even as we are known!*"

And have we now some *communion with God*? Do we realize at any time his presence, and thereby enter somewhat into the primitive bliss of Paradise when the Lord God walked in the garden, and the Divine Wisdom rejoiced in the habitable part of the earth, and her delights were with the sons of men? Then truly do we enter into present peace; a peace entirely independent of—unmindful of—the world to come. The present moment is bliss, and we are *satisfied*. But then, how few and far between are visitations such as these; how many voices of the world break in upon the holy silence of the soul; how many earthly shapes intrude themselves into the sacred circle and break the charm. And where then is our consolation but in the Hope of that predicted full communion, when "the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He will dwell

with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God ?”

And what, still further, is our present *service of God*, but mingled effort and disappointment ? True it is that in that service the Christian finds his greatest happiness ; that it is perfect freedom ; that God’s law is his delight ; and that in keeping of his commandments there is great reward. The exhilaration that accompanies activity, the glow of successful effort, the quiet sense of inward harmony ; the delight of testifying our gratitude to God ; and the thrilling consciousness of his complacency towards us ; all combine to shed an inexpressible blessedness through the heart, and to make us cry with David, “ Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them ! ” But then, what Christian is there who has not to mourn the hourly interruption of this holy service ? Who does not confess that in many things we all offend ? Who does not bitterly bewail that the things that he would he does not, and the things that he would not those he does, and there is no health in him ? O if our happiness were to depend exclusively on what we have actually *acquired* of holiness, if only according to the precise measure of our righteousness could be the measure of our peace, *no peace could there be for fallen man* ; neither in this world, for he has not attained to righteousness ; nor in the

next, for never can he hope on this condition to attain it. All hope would be smothered under the burden of despondency; all power for holiness crushed under the oppressive sense of impotency. To the future therefore we must look for the full happiness of holiness, that by the vigour which that future rouses in us we may achieve the holiness which is happiness. By Hope alone can we *begin* to work. The command of the compassionate Saviour must itself convey the life by which we may stretch forth the withered arm. By Hope alone can we *continue* to work, amidst temptation without and treachery within. And blessed be God! such Hope is ours, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue. By him are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that *by these* we may become partakers of the divine nature. And from such promises we may derive a daily joy, at once consolatory under disappointment and productive of success. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, *for they shall be filled.*" "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." "And the work of righteousness shall be peace: and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever."

Hope then is our only certain stay amidst the mental spiritual and moral imperfection of our

present state. It is the under-current of the renewed soul which alone runs steadily, while the surface is continually broken into eddies and swept by the vicissitudes of cloud and sunshine. And hence it has ever formed the preserving grace of God's people through every age. In the long catalogue of faithful men set before us in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Faith which is extolled as having been their animating and sustaining principle is for the most part *prospective*; is the assurance of blessings whose attainment was yet to come; is "the substance of things *hoped for*;" in short, is Hope: only not that hope which rests on nothing more substantial than the airy visions of a sanguine imagination, but that which is based and settled on the solid word of God who cannot lie. It was by this Faith which is Hope, that Abraham "sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country; for he *looked for* a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." It was by this Faith which is Hope, that the patriarchs "not having received the promises, *saw them afar off* and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims upon earth." It was by this Faith which is Hope, that Abraham when he was tried offered up Isaac, accounting that God was able *to raise him up even from the dead*:" or, as St. Paul says in another epistle,

“against Hope believing in *Hope*, and being fully persuaded that what God had promised he was able also to perform.” And all those other men of God who obtained a good report through faith, did so “*not having received the promise*,” because God had “provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” By *Hope* therefore were they saved, and by *Hope* must we. “Christ’s house we are, if we hold fast the *confidence and the rejoicing of the Hope* firm unto the end.” “If we *hope* for that we see not, then do we with *patience* wait for it.” “And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence unto the *full assurance of Hope* unto the end; that ye be not slothful but followers of them who through *faith and patience* inherit the promises.” “By two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we may have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the *Hope* set before us in the Gospel; which *Hope* we have as an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the Fore-runner Jesus is for us entered.” “Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin” (that is, of want of hope) “which doth so easily beset us, and let us run *with patience* the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and finisher



of our faith ; who, *for the joy that was set before him*, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be *wearied and faint* in your minds ! ”

And this Hope, remember, is no vain-glorious self-confidence ; for the essence of it is *dependence* on the promises and the help of another than ourselves. It is no idle and unholy presumption ; for it is limited and conditioned by the principles that we are holding fast, the dispositions we are cherishing, the path of conscientious obedience in which we are walking. It is a meek and quiet confidence in the faithfulness of God to those who love him, and an unpretending reliance on those assurances of Christ, “ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish neither shall any pluck them out of my hand ; yea, my Father which gave them unto me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.” Where the very form of the encouragement secures it from misapplication, and the very words that animate must at the same time sanctify. The Christian’s Hope is the hope of “ Christ’s sheep ; ”—not of the self-willed the proud and the presumptuous. It is the hope of those who

“hear his voice;”—not who listen to the syren song of Sin. It is the hope of those who “follow him;”—not who follow the devices and desires of their own hearts. It is the hope, that “when he shall appear we shall be *like him*, for we shall see him as he is;” and therefore “every one that hath *this Hope* in him *purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*”

But to enjoy this Hope in its full assurance, and to derive from it all the life and power which it can convey, we must recollect whence it springs, and how it is to be preserved from day to day.

It springs from *dependence on the work that Christ has wrought for us on the cross*. For it is only as we believe in God, that we can hope in God; only as we trust to his assurances of forgiveness for the past, that we can embrace his promises of safety for the future. “Being *justified by his grace*, we are made heirs through Hope of eternal life.” We must enter into relation with God as dear children before we can look forward with any feeling that deserves the name of Hope, to the inheritance of children. The careless, worldly-minded, unconverted man is without Hope, because he is virtually without God; and a stranger from the covenants of promise, because in spirit an alien from the commonwealth of Israel. We have only to look round upon the general feeling of mankind in the thought of death and of another world; the shrinking dread

which betrays the utter emptiness of their notions of eternity ; the clinging to this life, which shows that here only do they feel they have a solid footing and can grasp reality and substance ; we have only to remark the almost universal substitution of the cold term “ Resignation,”—a term of which Scripture actually knows nothing,—for the animated *Christian* term, and the joyful *Christian* idea, of Hope, “ *lively Hope*,” “ *blessed Hope*,” “ Hope that maketh not ashamed ;” in order to convince ourselves that only from the spiritual Experience of the Gospel can spring the spiritual Hope of the Gospel. If we would have “ everlasting consolation and *good hope*,” it is “ *through grace*” that we must have it—through the animating confidence that “ our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God even our Father hath loved us and chosen us unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” And therefore St. Paul represents the hope of future glory as springing from the faith in past forgiveness, and sustained through every trial by the consciousness of present friendship. “ Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”—there is forgiveness for the past ! “ by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand,”—there is friendship in the present ! “ and *rejoice in hope of the glory of God*,”—there is assurance as to the future ! Which hope,

the Apostle declares yet further, is not shaken by tribulation, does not make us hold down our heads with shame and disappointment, "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us,"—because the declarations of God's pardoning mercy pervade the honest-hearted Christian, and produce that buoyant consciousness of safety which exclaims in each successive trial, "If God be for us who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!"

But remember equally, how this Hope must be *preserved from day to day*. It must be preserved by preservation of the heart from sin, and of the conscience from defilement. Its life depends upon the death of its antagonist principle. And this antagonist principle is invigorated by every successive fall from moral excellence; nay flourishes of itself,

when there is merely negligence and want of growth in moral excellence. The Hope we speak of is the hope of holiness, and therefore it cannot be otherwise than a holy Hope, and with Holiness only can it dwell. "The hope of the righteous shall be gladness, but the expectation of the wicked shall perish." "Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water? Whilst it is yet in its greenness and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb. So are the paths of all that forget God, and the hypocrite's hope shall perish; whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web." O forget not that it is the Holy Ghost whose power makes the Christian's hope abound, and that the Holy Ghost can never dwell in an unholy heart. It is "*through the Spirit* that we wait for the hope of righteousness by faith," and this Spirit lusteth against the flesh and produceth all the fruits of righteousness. It is "the Holy Spirit of God whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption," and this Spirit is soon grieved by "bitterness and wrath and clamour and evil speaking;" by every evil thought and temper and desire. O then for careful jealous cherishing of his gentle inspirations! O for daily nourishment of all those dispositions, in the midst of which as in the temple of his holiness he loves to dwell! The assurance of our hope must vary as the experience of our sanctification. And it

is only as we can say with the *conscious integrity* of St. Paul "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," that we can also say with the *full assurance* of St. Paul "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day!"

PART III.

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THE NOURISHMENT

OF

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

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The counsels of Religion are not to be applied to the distempers of the soul as men used to take hellebore, but they must dwell together with the spirit of a man, and be twisted about his understanding for ever; they must be used like nourishment—that is, by a daily care and meditation—not like a single medicine and in the actual pressure of a present necessity.

BISHOP J. TAYLOR.

What then remains?—To seek  
Those helps, for his occasions ever near,  
Who lacks not will to use them; vows, renewed  
On the first motion of a holy thought;  
Vigils of contemplation; praise; and prayer,  
A stream, which, from the fountain of the heart,  
Issuing, however feebly, nowhere flows  
Without access of unexpected strength.

WORDSWORTH.

Qu'est-ce donc qu'un homme qui, reconnoissant l'Etre Suprême, ne le prie pas ? C'est un infortuné qui n'a point de Dieu ; qui vit tout seul dans l'univers ; qui ne tient à aucun être hors de lui ; qui, retombant sur son propre cœur, n'y trouve que lui-même, c'est à dire, ses peines ses dégoûts, ses inquiétudes, ses terreurs, avec quoi il puisse s'entretenir. C'est un infortuné qui vit dans l'univers comme un homme que l'hasard avoit jeté tout seul dans une île reculée et inaccessible, où il seroit sans maître, sans souverain, sans soin, sans discipline, sans attendre de ressource, sans se promettre une meilleure destinée, sans porter ses vœux et ses souhaits au-delà du vaste abîme qui l'environnerait, et sans chercher d'autre adoucissement à l'infortuné de sa condition qu'une molle indolence.

MASSILLON.



## PART III.

### THE NOURISHMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.



#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE NECESSITY OF DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES.

WE have seen that the Essence of the Spiritual life of Christianity lies in the filial disposition of the heart towards God, and that although the Source of this life is necessarily hidden in the inscrutable depths of the soul, its Development will take place according to the usual laws and workings of the human mind. This development may be neglected, may be hindered, may be limited; or it may be sought, assisted, fostered into full expansion. It may be quick or slow. It may be vigorous or feeble. But without *some* experience of it we have failed to gain that personal benefit from the truths of Christianity which they are intended to convey, and to make its blessings and its hopes *our own*.

But this benefit, even when gained, must be diligently cherished if we would retain possession of it, still more if we would reach the full enjoyment of its sweetness and power. The stream of holy thought must be continually fed from its original fountains and by tributary rills, or it will dry up and perish. The presence and influence of the Spirit of God are vouchsafed after a *moral* manner,—that is, not arbitrarily, but according to the laws of mind and heart and will; and therefore they must be maintained and increased by *moral* means,—that is, by all those exercises of the mind and heart and will, which are comprehended under the term Devotion, in its widest sense. Whatever tends to deepen and make vivid the Sense of God; to strengthen and extend holy thoughts affections and determinations; forms the proper and the indispensable nourishment of the Spiritual Life. O what a wide and fruitful field of meditation is here opened to us! God grant that we may expatiate therein with solemn step! God enable us to treat of Prayer in the spirit of prayer! to meditate devoutly on devotion!

Our first endeavour will be to show the *Necessity* of Devotional exercises; as the natural Effusion of the spirit of adoption, and as the indispensable Means of its nourishment and growth.

As the *natural Effusion* of the spirit of Adop-

tion, the Christian cannot do without Prayer. For this spirit is an effluence from the Spirit of God. It comes down from him ; and to him therefore it cannot but again ascend. Rather,—It is never separated from Him ; and in Him therefore it must dwell. The breath of natural life, though issuing from the hidden fountain of Being and diffused throughout the world, is not and cannot be divorced therefrom ; and therefore the Apostle says of every creature, that “ in God we live and move and have our being.” Life is no possession of our own, made over to us, but it depends from hour to hour on the unceasing inspiration of the breath of God. “ In his hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.” “ Thou sendest forth thy spirit and they are created ; thou takest away their breath and they die.” And just so is it with the Spiritual even as with the natural life. Not only from God does it proceed, but *in God it must live*. It is a union of the soul to God, and therefore a *communion* with God. Intercourse is essential to its nature. The individual breath commingles with the universal. And therefore does St. John declare “ we have *fellowship* with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.” And he who has the Spirit of God is said to dwell in God, and God in him. There is affinity with God begotten in the soul ; and where there is affinity there must be

attraction and blending into one. "Prayer," says Bishop Taylor, "what is it but an ascent of the mind towards God?"

Besides, this spirit of adoption is the spirit of a Son, a child, a loving child towards his affectionate parent; and we know what are the effusions of such a child towards him he loves. How his heart goes forth towards him. How he delights to seize, nay make, occasions of coming into his presence, of watching his eye, of catching his smile, of communicating to him his thoughts, and of listening to his words. How he turns to him in every need, depending upon his encouragement and help. How he refers to him his plans and wishes, that he may obtain his approbation of them or get them modified by his suggestions. And all these exercises of the filial mind are just the chief component parts of Prayer. For Prayer is the effusion of Delight in God's presence, Dependence on God's help, and Deference to God's will.

And therefore do we see this spirit breathing forth so naturally from our blessed Lord, who was emphatically The Son of God and was therefore filled with the spirit of a Son. In how many instances do we find him, not formally addressing himself to Prayer, but his thoughts taking in their very birth the *form* of Prayer, rising up as such within the mind by their natural tendency towards

God. Supplication, thanksgiving, general commendation of himself into his Father's hand, *escape* from him, as it were, by their native buoyancy and expansiveness. Supplication, for example, when about to heal the deaf and dumb man; "He took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers in his ears and touched his tongue, and *looking up to heaven he sighed*, and saith unto him Ephphatha, that is, 'Be opened.'" Thanksgiving, again, when he had come to the grave of Lazarus to raise his friend; He sees by faith the work already accomplished; his adoration cannot wait; it breathes itself out before the fact; "Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." And this natural Thanksgiving he exhibits in the slightest and the most habitual occurrences of life, so that, as St. Luke informs us, the disciples going to Emmaus *recognized* their Master, after his resurrection, by his devoutness. "It came to pass as he sat at meat with them he took bread and blessed it" (that is, blessed God for it), "and brake and gave to them, and *their eyes were opened and they knew him*." It was customary indeed for the master of a family to begin each meal with an ascription of praise to God as the Provider of it; but that this stranger should thus act for them as the head of their little party, and breathe forth the very thanksgiving which they had been accustomed

to from their Lord—*it must be He himself!* Even as gait and manner and various little habits betray a man, so was Jesus recognized by his Devoutness. And then observe his general Dependence upon God, and commendation of himself into his hands. When the soldiers came with swords and staves to take him, the Disciples think immediately of dependence on an arm of flesh, and seize the sword to defend their master. But Jesus *thinks only of God*. “Put up thy sword into its place. Thinkest thou that I cannot now *pray to my Father*, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” And when the awful moment of dissolution came and he must dismiss his spirit, that spirit he breathed forth in prayer to God—“Father into thy hands I commend my spirit!”

Nor were the followers of Jesus destitute of these effusions of Devoutness. You recollect how after the Apostles had reported to their friends all that the chief priests and elders had said to them, “when they heard that, they *lifted up their voice to God with one accord* and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth and the sea and all that in them is!” And how in the prison at Philippi, “at midnight Paul and Silas *prayed and sang praises unto God*.” And how the converts on the day of Pentecost, “continued daily with one accord in the temple, eating their meat

with gladness and singleness of heart and *praising God.*" Here are instances of those spontaneous aspirations which are the natural breathings of the renewed mind. We speak not now of acts of prayer, times of prayer, places of prayer, but of the *spirit of prayer* as the necessary effusion of the spirit of adoption; of that bent and bias of the Spiritual nature which displays itself at every opportunity afforded it, and in which lies the evidence of our possession of that nature. For true piety is a spontaneous principle. Even amidst all our remaining evil, dulness hinderances and imperfection, *true piety is a spontaneous principle*, the welling forth of an interior life. The spring may be but imperfectly opened up; the stream may flow but languidly; its course may be obstructed by innumerable obstacles; and it may often seem to lose itself amidst the sands of earth; but still a spring there must be, and that spring of *living water*. "Religion," says the pious Scougal,\* "is an inward free self-moving principle; and the love which a pious man bears to God and goodness is not so much by virtue of a command enjoining him so to do as by a *new nature instructing and prompting him to it*; nor doth he pay his devotions as an unavoidable tribute, only to

\*In his "Life of God in the Soul of Man;" one of the most valuable tracts on the list of the Christian Knowledge Society.

appease the divine justice or quiet his clamorous conscience; but those religious exercises are *the proper emanations of the divine life*, the natural employments of the new-born soul."

But the Necessity of devotional exercises will be still more apparent if we consider them further, as *the indispensable Means* by which the spirit of adoption must be nourished and invigorated. For this spirit, being not of native growth within us,—nay being every moment opposed and checked by that which is of native growth (Gal. v. 17, Article IX.),—cannot be sustained, and still less developed into full expansion, but by continuous inspirations from its heavenly Source. "Grant to us," we pray in our collect for the fifth Sunday after Easter, "that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good." And again in our Communion service, "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee and worthily magnify thy holy name." But these inspirations are communicated, not by sudden illapse or sensible impulse, but by the production of spiritual *thoughts*. By the *ideas* of God and his relation to us in Christ was this spirit first awakened in us, and by the revival of these ideas it must be fed. But to the revival of any idea,—still more to the making it familiar to us, so that connecting itself with various trains of thought, and,



rising up with them into the consciousness, it shall modify their character by its presence;—there is required a frequent revival of the associations which tend to bring it before us. It is the actual *presence* of sensible objects, constantly repeated, that makes them so familiar to us. It is the frequent presence of a friend which obtains for his idea such a place in our hearts, and an influence on our thoughts. And with objects not sensible, with friends at a distance, the only substitute for this presence is the re-production of the associations, in the midst of which their ideas dwell. And hence then the need of prayer to make present to us God; of that meditative recollection of his character which withdraws the attention from all other objects, either of sense or of imagination, and fixes it upon the portrait of our Father as he is exhibited in Christ, till we seem to know him for our own, to see him smile upon us, to expect him to speak to us in words of fatherly affection! Christian! if you would have something more than dim and shadowy conceptions of God; if you would do more than hear of him by the hearing of the ear; if your eyes would see him; you must be diligent in all the means of grace.

But the spirit of adoption is something more than vivid *conceptions* of God. It is a new *disposition* towards him. And to the formation of a disposition of mind there is required the frequent revival of the

feelings of which it is composed, and their habitual exercise. It is the constant exercise from earliest childhood of the filial feelings, which renders them so strong so prompt so seemingly instinctive; and the most affectionate child will lose something of the freshness and the force of those feelings if he be long separated from the presence or from the memorials of his parent. And just similarly is it with the filial feelings of the Christian towards his heavenly Father. It was long perhaps before they were awakened; their repetition is but fitful and irregular; their settling into habit and disposition is checked by many things without us and more within; and nothing therefore but exercise, steady and deliberate exercise, can preserve them, much less strengthen and consolidate them. And this exercise is to be sought in Devotion; in specific acts, at stated times, and with sustained attention. For it is only by repeated acts that any general habits (of mind as well as of body) can be either formed or maintained. If our affections towards God are weak and dull, it is by prayer that we must quicken and invigorate them; prayer which brings before our mind memorials of God's love to us,—all that is winning, and touching and soul-subduing in his character and in his dealings with us,—and, as by a live coal from the altar, kindles our affections into flame. Its influence is like the turning up some

forgotten token of a departed friend. It stirs the heart as the single look of Jesus did the heart of Peter, and unlocks the smothered spring of life-restoring tears.

Again. The life of the spirit is a life of faith; opposed to the life of sense, and struggling with it. It is oppressed and enfeebled every moment by the rush of millions of unfriendly though unavoidable thoughts of earth. Twelve, fourteen, sixteen hours of each successive day it suffers violence from the mighty current of external things invading every sense, and hurrying with it every thought and feeling. How shall it rear its head against this, how be saved from being swept into oblivion, but by deliberate habitual persevering exercises of Devotion? All that is low and evil in our nature is nourished incessantly, even against our will; we are immersed in its very atmosphere, and every breath we draw is tainted with it. But all that is high and holy must be nourished *by our will*, and by laborious flight into a better atmosphere, if ever we would have it breathe within us freely and with vigour. From the high places of devotion we must inhale new elasticity. On the wings of prayer we must fly up into the presence of the Holy One and bathe our fainting spirit in that pure Light of heaven, which is at the same time Life.

Devotion therefore is indispensable to the nou-

ishment of the Spiritual Life. Not as an indulgence merely, when the mind ascends with freedom towards its God ; but as a business and a means of grace. We must not only *yield* to prayerfulness but we must *give ourselves* to prayer, and set every sail to catch the passing breath of spirituality ; not only vent the spontaneous feelings of our hearts but awaken cherish and detain those feelings ; not only therefore follow out a casual impulse, but by rules of regular devotion, by setting apart of times and places, and by the use of every rational help, pursue the *work* of Spiritual Nourishment. The sacred flame of piety is low and flickering ; we must inclose and shelter it from the blasts of earth. It too often sinks and slumbers ; we must sedulously stir the dying embers. It is at best but faint and feeble ; we must fan it into vigour. "I put thee in remembrance," says St. Paul to Timothy, "that thou *stir up* the gift of God which is in thee." "For like as fire has need of fuel," adds Theophylact, "so does the grace of the Holy Spirit require our personal earnestness and care and watchfulness, if we would have its genial warmth abiding in us."

We see this in the case even of our blessed Lord. Though filled with the Spirit he nevertheless made practice of devotion for the nourishment of that Spirit. He did not merely breathe it forth spontaneously as occasion offered, but he used of pur-

pose means for cherishing it; breaking off from his employments and his friends, yea and his charitable offices, that he might refresh his weary mind by intercourse with God. "When he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain to pray,"—with the *purpose and design* of spending time in prayer to God. And St. Mark informs us that "in the morning, rising up a great while before day,"—breaking off his sleep with the deliberate intent of engaging in devotion,—“he went out and departed into a solitary place and there prayed.” Nay, St. Luke records that Jesus “went up into a mountain to pray and *continued all night in prayer to God.*” Here are instances of our Divine Master setting himself to prayer as a *general* means of nourishing Spiritual Life.

But we see him, further, on *particular* occasions seeking *special* strength by prayer. It was when he was about to consecrate his twelve disciples to the sacred office of Apostle, that he gave the whole previous night to prayer. When he was about to reveal to them his divine glory by his Transfiguration, “he took Peter and James and John, and went up into a mountain *to pray.*” And when he saw the hour of his agony at hand, he sought for power for the dreadful struggle, and drank in the Spirit by which he might sustain it, in earnest pleading *prayer.* “Then cometh Jesus with his disciples to a place

called Gethsemane, and saith unto them, Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder; and being in an agony he *prayed the more earnestly*, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

And if then Prayer was thus necessary for the Holy Jesus, how much more is it necessary for his people, who are hourly beset by Sin! No Christian ever lived without devotion. No man can be a Christian without making a determined business of devotion. Thus it was that the Apostles and the Saints of old maintained their Spiritual life. "They all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." "Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer." "We will give ourselves continually to the word of God and prayer." "On the Sabbath day we went out of the city by a river side where prayer was wont to be made." And hence we have so many exhortations in the Bible to Prayer. "Commune with your own heart, upon your bed, and be still." "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." "Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; quench not the Spirit." "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." And hence too we observe in all the lives of holy men in every age, that a habit of devo-

tion, and the careful regularity without which *such* a habit cannot exist, are prominent characteristics. And is there any Christian who has followed these examples and obeyed those exhortations, who cannot testify from his own experience how essential a part of his existence is devotion, and how blessed are its influences on the Spiritual life? Have you not often gone to seek the face of God, oppressed in spirit and cold in heart, and when, *without the purpose of devotion* and the determined execution of that purpose you would not have experienced one spontaneous aspiration of the mind towards Him, but would have sunk from bad to worse, from lukewarmness to sin,—have you not in such a frame been obliged to press upon yourself as a sacred duty what is in fact your highest privilege—and yet, nevertheless, through God's most gracious blessing on the effort, have you not returned from his invigorating presence buoyant with recovered energy, your very frame breathing a diviner life, and your countenance, like the countenance of Moses when he came down from the mount, all radiant with the glory of your God? “Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, O God, and causest to approach unto thee! He shall be *satisfied* with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple!”

## CHAPTER II.

## DEVOUT EXERCISES OF MIND.

When we endeavoured to trace the Development of the Spiritual Life, we found that it approximates to its fullest form in proportion as we realize the idea of God in all the exercises of our moral nature—of mind and heart and will; in proportion as His presence is recognized by us, His help is confided in, and His will is made to regulate our own. Devotion therefore, as the nourishment of this Life, must consist in the habitual use of all those means by which this exercise of our highest faculties may be made most ready and familiar, ultimately most *natural*, to the soul.

And of these means of nourishing the Spiritual Life, the first and most important, as preparatory to all the rest, is *the training of the Mind to constant recognition and enjoyment of the presence of God*. Where by speaking of the *enjoyment* of that presence, it will be perceived that I mean something more by exercises of the Mind than merely intellectual cogitations, and speculative inquiry into divine things, I mean all those states of the soul which have not



in them any of the fluctuations of hope and fear, nor of the gradations of desire and determination, but which, nevertheless, are full of interest, though a quiet one ; of feeling, though a contemplative one. Those conditions of the mind which are termed by some the Sentiments ; by others the Tastes ; by others the *Æsthetic* perceptions ; by others the immediate emotions ;\* and whose distinctive mark is that they are occupied with the *present* (the either visibly or ideally Present) without reference to Past, or Future ; and with this Present, as an object not of desire and pursuit, but simply of admiration and complacency and love. There is a movement in the mind, but it is not an *onward* movement. It is dilation without progression. It is as the expand-

\* As by Dr. Brown, who adds, "They differ from the intellectual states of mind, by that peculiar vividness of feeling which every one understands but which it is impossible to express by any verbal definition, as truly impossible as to define sweetness or bitterness by any other way than by a statement of the circumstances in which they arise. There is no reason to fear, however, from this impossibility of verbal definition, that any one who has tasted what is sweet or bitter, or enjoyed the pleasures of melody and fragrance, will be at all in danger of confounding these terms ; and as little reason is there to fear that our emotions will be confounded with our intellectual states of mind, by those who have simply remembered and compared, and have also loved or hated."

ing wavelets of the peaceful lake which is complete within itself, not as the rushing current of the river that hastens towards the distant ocean.

And hence the perplexity, and perhaps the scorn, which this subject of devotional exercises must produce in every mind in which those higher sentiments and totally unselfish feelings have been checked, or have been wounded and destroyed, by intercourse with an unfeeling world. The noblest states of the Pious mind are those, not of intellect nor of passion but of quiet love ; and what wonder therefore if the dry abstract reasoner who lives in the region of mere words, or the selfish worldling who knows of no emotions but those of hope and fear, advantage and disadvantage, should look upon the feelings of devotion as the effusions only of diseased imagination, and the fantasies of enthusiasm? By the spiritual sense alone can the things of the spirit be appreciated. The sweetest harmony does but jar upon the ear of him who has no music in his soul. The loveliest works of nature or of art have no attraction but to the eye of Taste. The grandest bursts of poetry or eloquence possess no charm but for the mind of genius. The purest affections of friendship and love are unknown, nay inconceivable, to the sensual and sordid heart. But just in the sphere of all these higher states of mind does Piety lie, and Devotion exercise itself. For Piety is not

indeed *mere* Taste, nor Admiration, nor Affection,—but it is the experience of these feelings *in relation to God*; it is the co-presence of His idea amidst them all, as the Being in whom alone they find their full enjoyment. And only therefore by reference to these feelings in their lower exercise, can we illustrate what we mean by Piety, and by Devotion which is the breath of Piety, towards God. “Would you know what the affections are,” it has been beautifully said, “ask your heart when, sad or glad, it is touched by thoughts of father mother brother sister friend, and in its sadness or gladness still feels a serenity as if belonging to the untroubled regions of the skies. Fancy comes and goes like the rainbow, passion like the storm, transiently beautifying or subliming the clouds of life. But affection is a permanent light, without distinction of night and day, which once risen never sets, and always, in mild meridian,

“Seeming immortal in its depth of rest.”

And to this “depth of rest” the Christian mind attains by all those exercises of devotion which bring God present to the consciousness and inweave his Idea with all we see, and all we read of, and all we share in with our fellow-men; by MEDITATION on God’s works and ways—by STUDY of his Truth—by COMMUNION with his people.

## SECTION I.

## DEVOTIONAL MEDITATION.

MEDITATION, not merely as a stated exercise but as a devout *habit* of connecting the Idea of God with all we see around us, is a most important means of nourishing the Spiritual life. Isaac practised it when he "went out to meditate in the field at even-tide." David, when he "considered the heavens, the work of God's fingers, the moon and the stars which he had ordained;" and again when he exclaimed, "I remember the days of old, I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the works of thy hands." John when he was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day." And Paul, when in holy musing he was carried out of himself and "caught up to the third heaven."

Which meditative habit will find its food and stimulant in *Contemplation* of the works and ways of God. For in those works and ways he manifests himself, and by them is he understood. Observation and reflection must furnish the *occasions* of Devotion. Thought must precede feeling, though feeling is much more than thought. For genuine mental feeling is nothing but a certain state of the thoughts.

And hence its permanence when the fire of animal life is gone. Hereby it becomes part of the soul itself, and partaker of its immortality. States of sensation become more feeble at every repetition, because they result from the excitement of animal powers which are perishable. But states of mental feeling—taste, affection, sentiment—are strengthened and matured by exercise, because they result from *thoughts*, which are enduring. Not the most novel but the most familiar scenery, not the most recent but the best known melodies, not the newest but the oldest friends, not the most startling but the most intimate and inborn truths, are those which most delight the mind.

And therefore by frequent contemplation of those works and ways of God, which reflect upon us from every side his great Idea, must we make the feeling of his presence intimate and familiar. In all places of his dominion He is present. Heaven and earth are full of his glory. And therefore, in all places of his dominion will the meditative spirit *recognize* his presence and adore his glory. The foundation of all true Religion is the grand truth of the Unity of God—of the universal agency of one and the same great Being in all events and things. And this unity is not practically realized but in proportion as we see God in all things, and all things in God. “He only,” says Bishop Taylor, “to whom all things are

One, who draweth all things to One, and seeth all things in One, may enjoy true peace and rest of Spirit." \* Wherever we contemplate powers at work in Nature, or Providence, or Grace, which we neglect to refer up to the One undivided source of life, we are resting in something below God and breaking into fragments his Unity. Nay, when we contemplate God too distinctly under different aspects, as sometimes the God of Nature and sometimes of Providence and sometimes of Grace, we are going far to make this same most dangerous separation, and to disunite the various attributes and workings of the single One. † Who does not feel that men have spoken and written as if the Jehovah of the Jews had abandoned all the rest of the world to meaner hands; and as if the miserable heathen were not only "without God" through the blindness of their own heart, but without his sovereign rule and fatherly care, his "doing good and giving rain from heaven and fruitful seasons;" nay and as if the

\* Which sentence is borrowed from Thomas à Kempis : — "Cui omnia unum sunt, et omnia ad unum trahit, et omnia in uno videt; potest stabilis corde esse, et in Deo pacificus manere."

De Imit. Christi. I. iii.

† It is a dull and obtuse mind that must divide in order to distinguish. And in such we may contemplate the source of superstition and idolatry.

COLERIDGE.

God of the awakened penitent had not been also the God of the previous prodigal, nor were the God of those around him in "the world," who amidst all their ignorance and sinfulness are nevertheless "made of one blood with him," and have the common Father "not far from every one of them." It is the God of Nature who is also the God of Revelation; and the God of Providence who is the God of Grace. God has not revealed himself by one method exclusively but by many; and God does not work in one domain exclusively but in all. And therefore we must have an eye for all his revelations of himself, and our total impression of his character must be collected and compounded from them all. Each is imperfect taken by itself, but each contributes something to the grand and perfect whole. Let the man of observation, and the man of experiment, and the man of science, and the man of history, and the man of the Bible, admire, each one in his sphere, the marvellous revelations of divine power and wisdom and goodness; but let the man of large Devoutness, standing in the centre of a sphere which comprehends them all, trace up (by faith wherever sight may fail him) all these several rays of glory into that stupendous BEING who is power and wisdom and goodness, all in one; and whom he nevertheless (amazing thought!) may call his *Father* and his *Friend*.

See how St. Paul, in the first and second chapters of his Epistle to the Romans, commemorates four different modes by which God manifests himself to man. *By the works of Nature*; which reveal his Majesty and Might. "For the invisible things of God—namely, his eternal power and Godhead—are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." *By the laws of natural consequence*; which reveal his righteous Displeasure against Sin, by annexing to it, nay drawing out from it even as the fruit is developed from the seed (compare James i. 15), its own appropriate punishment. "For the wrath of God," says Paul, "is revealed against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men;" and if we inquire How? we discover from the whole context of the passage, especially from verses 24, 26, and 28, that the Apostle viewed this revelation as being made by God giving up the heathen to the brutalizing ignorance and the vile affections which Idolatry fosters. *By the voice of conscience*; which reveals the Holy Will of God. For the very Heathen who do evil "know the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death." And lastly, *by the voice of Christ*, and the proclamations of his Gospel; which reveal the pardoning Compassion of God. "For therein is the righteousness of God by faith revealed to faith,"—his willingness to pardon and approve and bless every returning sinner,



upon the simple ground of faith in his Compassion.

All things therefore are manifestations of God, and from all things will the meditative Christian pass on to God. He looks around upon the earth or upward to the heavens, and amidst the might and loveliness of Nature he thinks of him who made sustains and blesses all. Nature is to him but the symbol of the Creator; and the contemplation of it but the steps by which his feeble powers are helped to climb the heights of Meditation, and at last to reach the Lofty One who sits supreme above his works.

Nor less devoutly does the Christian recognize his heavenly Father in the long concatenation of Events, and in all the ordinary as well as extraordinary turns of Providence. History becomes to him alive with indications of his God. And like the sacred Historians, who never separate earth from heaven, nor events which are but products from their root in the First Cause, nor men in all their various purposes and works from the Divine will which controls them all; so also does the meditative Christian recognize in all occurrences an all-directing God. "The fortune of Alexander," says Bishop Newton, "is but another name for the providence of God." And still more generally may we say, The fortune of the world, in its innumerable parts

and its immeasurable whole, is but the ordination of God. This is the clew which guides the devout man safely through the labyrinth of events tangled with mazes and perplexed with errors ; and by this he walks in peace. He may not see, still less make out, the objects round him. He may not be able to tell the way he came nor that which he is going nor what will be the next turn in his path. But then he has the clew ! he grasps the clew ! and this therefore, implicitly and confidently,—ignorantly, if you will, but with an intelligent ignorance—blindly, if you please, but not without inward light—this he follows with a quiet adoration.

But still more does he feel the unity of God's unceasing agency in that history which is, beyond all others, full of interest and instruction to him—the history of *Himself*. Viewed in the light of Faith and Love, how wondrous to him is the story of his life ! Not a circumstance therein, but he can either *see* in it the hand of God or can *believe* that it was there. Not a single tint of dark or bright in all that many-coloured picture, but is subdued into one harmonious whole by the placid light of God's uplifted countenance shed over all.

And then especially, in what are called the influences of his Grace (though *all is Grace*, through nature history and providence from first to last) ; in the truths and promises of his holy Word, the

work and invitations of his Son, the consolations of his Spirit, and the thoughts that from these several sources stream into the mind and fill it with a peace a hope a vigour which no other revelations can afford—O here it is, above all, that the devout believer loves to recognize his God! Here, to look out with an elevating awe upon the wide-spread ocean of his goodness till contemplation breaks off and loses itself in Wonder; till all objects and all thoughts find their confluence and their outburst in one deep broad stream of Adoration,—“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given unto him that it should be recompensed to him again? For of him and through him and to him are all things; to whom be glory for ever! Amen!”

Thus then *Adoration* is the offspring of Contemplative Devotion. We glide along the ever-deepening tide of thought into a new world. Outward objects vanish from the consciousness. Inward thoughts subside into one vast wave of undistinguishable feeling which lifts us above ourselves. The ideas of power, wisdom, love, unite and blend themselves in One great Being whose presence fills the soul, and with whom we commune as it were

instinctively in unutterable prayer ; the prayer, not of understanding but of Faith ; the inward gathering of the spirit into itself to offer itself up to God ; the gazing on his glory till new life flows from it into the heart, and this life is felt to be the life of God. Self is no longer thought of, nor the wants of self. We lie passive in our Father's hands and know no will but his. We are given up to his influences. We inhale his quickening Spirit. We join with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven to laud and magnify his glorious name ; evermore praising him and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory ; Glory be to thee, O Lord most High !

Speak we here of things unknown, and feelings set too high for man ? Nay but we speak the language and express the feelings of our *Common* prayer-book, in its holiest office. And we give utterance to thoughts which every pious heart authenticates. And we touch a string in unison with which such hearts are strung, and therefore do they vibrate with it, and swell the trembling prelude into a sustained and full-voiced chant of Adoration which rises, like a fragrant cloud of incense, up to God. Thus felt and chanted one, who now has joined the choir of heaven, when he exclaimed before the Majesty of Nature—

“O dread and silent Mount ! I gazed upon thee,  
 Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,  
 Didst vanish from my thought : entranced in prayer,  
 I worshipped the Invisible alone.” \*

Thus felt another kindred spirit, when he sang of  
 one who, having gazed upon the loveliness of earth,  
 and sea and sky,—

“His spirit drank  
 The spectacle : sensation, soul, and form,  
 All melted into him ; they swallow’d up  
 His animal being ; in them did he live  
 And by them did he live ; they were his life.  
 In such access of mind, in such high hour  
 Of visitation from the living God,  
 Thought was not ; in enjoyment it expired.  
 No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request ;  
 Rapt into still communion that transcends  
 The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,  
 His mind was a thanksgiving to the power  
 That made him ; it was blessedness and love.” †

And need I add, that thus mused and kindled  
 and adored, a greater than all uninspired men, “the  
 man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the  
 God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel,”  
 when “the Spirit of the Lord spake by him and  
 His word was in his tongue.” Take a single in-  
 stance in that glorious Hymn, the 104th Psalm. He

\* Coleridge.—“Hymn before Mont Blanc.”

† Wordsworth.—“The Excursion.”

had begun, therein, with Contemplation of the "honour and majesty" of God; he had gazed upon the light with which he clothed himself as with a garment and the heavens that he stretched out as a curtain; he had looked abroad upon the steadfast earth the restless deep and the refreshing streams; he had meditated on the various provision which the Lord had made for the sustenance of man and beasts and universal life; but long before his survey is completed, out of Contemplation springs forth devout Emotion; his soul begins to expand and to ascend and press beyond herself; the Spirit within him breathes forth towards the Spirit of the Universe, and he exclaims in short reiterated broken bursts of Adoration—"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches!" "The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works." "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. *My meditation of Him shall be sweet*; I will be glad in the Lord!" "Bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord!"

Christian Reader, do we cultivate this spirit of holy Meditation enough? Do we not too often think more of *ourselves* when we draw near to God in prayer, than of Him in whose bright presence we stand? And do we not thus defeat one great purpose of

Devotion which is to raise us out of self and its anxieties, and above the world and its vexatious occupations, and away from sense and its importunate images, into the pure untroubled region of the fair and good? If we make Devotion merely the enumeration of our wants our fears and our hopes; of our weaknesses our sorrows and our sins; we still are *lingering amidst* those wants and fears and sorrows and sins; we are looking only on a reflected image of ourselves and of our circumstances; we *seem* to be leaving the world beneath us, yet, like a troubled ghost which cleaves still to the flesh, we are only hovering round the spot where its remains are laid. But if we look forth upon *God* in self-forgetting Meditation, we are won away unconsciously from all our lower wants and fears; and when we rise up from the vision of his excellence and descend again to meet them, we are astonished to perceive how insignificant they were, we behold them in a light shed down from heaven, and we can bear our griefs and set about our duties with a new and tranquil mind. Even as when the distempered man has tossed all night upon a sea of tumultuous dreams and his soul is shattered by them—he breaks away from the bewildering trance with morning's dawn; looks out upon the fresh and sparkling prospect; drinks in the air of heaven; and is astonished at the very possibility of being shaken as he has been

by unreal phantoms of the brain. O be sure of this, the more we think of God and realize his presence, the more shall we become like God. We shall catch some faint resemblance of the features that we gaze upon, and while we behold his glory we shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord.



## SECTION II.

## DEVOTIONAL READING.

THE Spiritual life is a mental life ; and by the exercise of Mind therefore must it be nourished. But Mind is exercised not only by Observation and Reflection, but by appropriation of the observation and reflection of other men. And this appropriation is accomplished most effectually by Reading. Reading therefore is an important means of nourishing the Spiritual life ; the devout perusal and self-application of such writings as elevate the principles, refine the moral sense, and rouse the slumbering energies. It is not easy to originate our own states of mind. We need not only occasions for thought, but the suggestion of thought. We need not merely truths and feelings stored up in ourselves, but the daily application of some impulse from without to wake up and bring out those truths and feelings. And for this God has vouchsafed, besides the voice of our immediate friends in temporary intercourse, the words of our fellow Christians of every age and clime in permanent writings. Blessed be our all-providing Father

for such helps ! The Christian will prize them and will diligently use them, not for the gratification of curiosity, not for the whiling away an idle hour, not for the substitution of a mechanical operation in the place of a spiritual exercise, not to make Attention stand proxy for Reflection ; but that *by* Attention, Reflection may be put in motion ; by the borrowed spark the light of our own spirit may be kindled. How often will the reading of some pointed question open up a new view of our spiritual state, and set us searching into ourselves for days. How often will a single suggested idea illuminate whole regions of the mind, and make a thousand subjects hitherto confused and dark, at once and in a moment clear to us. And how gently elevating is the quiet infusion of some quickening feeling, which finds and mixes with a thousand kindred emotions, and stirs them all into full life ! It steals beneath our heavy, stranded mind, and before we are conscious of its influence floats it nearer to the haven where we would be. It breathes softly on our slumbering spirit like gentlest music, and insinuates itself amidst our earthly dreams, till we find ourselves, we know not how or why, awake and alive to God. Let the Christian therefore never be discouraged when his mind is dull and indevout, but turn to some awakening volume, some favourite passage, some suitable prayer, some spiritual hymn, above all, some inspir-

ing psalm or chapter of the word of God, and wait in humble faith—out of which faith will steal a half-formed supplication—for the revival of his spirit. It is the essence of wisdom, if we cannot gain directly our object to take a circuitous course for its attainment, to address ourselves to some one intermediate means (however distant from our ultimate end) by which it may at last be reached. And it is the Christian's wisdom to do this, as, generally, for the regulation of his mind and the formation of his character, so also for the sustenance of the Spiritual Life. That life is alas! a weak and sickly thing, and it must be fostered with the most assiduous and much-contriving care; it is a delicate emanation, a breath, and it must be fanned with gentlest solicitude. We can do nothing, and can be nothing, of ourselves; but what can we not do (through God's gracious blessing on those susceptibilities which he himself has rendered capable of such manifold influences) by the wise and persevering use of various, minute, and in themselves most insignificant, means!

But then these helps must be ever carefully used *as means*. They must never be perverted to supersede the very end they are intended to promote. The perusal of the page, the reading of the chapter, the utterance of the form of prayer, the singing of the hymn, must never be rested in as *of themselves*

devotion but only as the food and nourishment of devotion. No man can rightly think and pray and feel *for us* ; he can only give us helps whereby we may think and pray and feel for ourselves. Nothing is ours but what we mentally appropriate. Nothing can benefit us but what we actually ourselves *do*. To our own substance must all foreign aliment be assimilated if we would grow thereby. Through our own veins must it propel accelerated life. We must not only read mark and learn but we must *inwardly digest*, whatever God in his good providence has furnished for our spiritual food.

And how then shall we most effectually employ Devotional Reading, for our Spiritual Nourishment? Let us suppose the *word of God* to be the means that we would use towards this end, what method shall we take?

That method must be determined by the particular object that we have in view. There are various objects for which we may read the word of God. For general information concerning the methods of God in his education of the human race. For particular insight into the scheme of Salvation which he has revealed and carried out by his dear Son. For getting our minds imbued with the leading ideas of Christian doctrine, and the governing principles of Christian practice. In short, for all things necessary to a godly life, for doctrine

for reproof for correction for instruction in righteousness. And according to our object so must be our method of perusal. For all true method must be suited to, nay take its rise from, the specific nature of the subject we are treating. Whether our perusal shall be cursory and continuous or critical and fragmentary ; whether it shall collect and combine various particulars or trace steadily the development of some one truth ; whether we shall passively yield up our attention to the sacred text or only take therefrom materials for active personal reflection ; all this will be regulated by the specific end for which we open the holy book at each particular time. This only must be constant, that we have *some* end ; some deliberate purpose present to our consciousness when we consult the oracles of God ; and that we do not take them up, glance over them, and put them down again, with an unmeaning listlessness.

When then our object is the nourishment of the Spiritual Life, this devotional end determines the corresponding devotional method to be pursued. We must bring to the Bible such a spirit and adopt in reading it such a course, as may best conduce to the strengthening of our sense of God's immediate presence to our minds.

For this purpose we should meditate upon the Bible as conveying to us *the Voice of God himself*.

The Scriptures were written, it is true, by many and various men, in many and various ages. They were written by these men for the immediate use of their contemporaries, and with reference to the circumstances which surrounded them. But then those who thus wrote were *partakers of the Spirit of God*. What they said and wrote as the Ambassadors of God they said and wrote, not from the conclusions merely of their own limited understanding but from the secret inspirations of divine wisdom. And it is the special mark of *wisdom* (which mark therefore the *divine* wisdom possesses in perfection) that it so treats particulars as to bring them under general principles ; and in the *forms* of the local and the temporary conveys the *essence* of what is universal and eternal. And consequently the Scriptures do not convey to us the voice of *men* merely (however shrewd and experienced and devout they may have been), solving the particular questions and directing the particular duties of their fellow men around them ; but they convey to us in and with this *form* of the revelation (accompanying each particular utterance even as a fundamental melody pervades and limits all the variations of which it is susceptible, and may be traced throughout them all) the voice of *God himself* addressed to all men in all ages, and solving the general questions and directing the general duties which belong to man *as man*.

It is the wisdom therefore of the devout reader of Scripture *to discern the voice of God; to adore the Sovereign King in the person of his Ambassadors; to recognize the Spirit actuating the living creatures which announce his presence, yea breathing even in the wheels which are the conductors of his influence; and thus to make the Unseen God as effectually present to us by the forms of language and of thought which the Bible has preserved, as He was made present to Adam and to the Patriarchs and to the Prophets by the forms (for even to them by forms only could he show himself) of bodily appearance and of audible sound.* It is in the mind that God's presence must be realized, and it is only by the mind—by what this brings to the contemplation of his manifestations, and retains within itself of his communications—that we can truly see Him. There can be no other perception of God, to a created being, but the perception of his Idea in the consciousness; and the fulness, and the corresponding benefit, of that perception will depend upon the frequency with which that Idea is revived; the steadiness with which it is sustained; and the intimacy and comprehensiveness of its connection with all our other trains of thought. And therefore we are not to think ourselves less privileged than the saints of old, because we have not extraordinary manifestations of God. We, equally with them,

have every opportunity of recognizing Him in the things around us ; and, for the special revelation which came rarely and transiently to the astonished ear of each particular man of God, we have, instead, the lasting record of all his revelations to all his prophets, placed permanently in our hands and made accessible to our daily meditation. In many an age "the word of the Lord was precious," that is, scarce ; "there was no open vision." And even the Priests and Prophets of God were obliged to "enquire at the word of the Lord" from time to time as they needed council ; to consult the Urim and Thummim ; to present themselves before the oracle. Whereas we have now this word ever open to our view, nay stored up in our memories ; and at all times and in all places we may enter into the Sanctuary and commune with our Father ; even as it is written, "I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their heart, and they shall not teach every man his neighbour saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them saith the Lord." The only difference is, that God's voice to us is not that of *particular* direction in particular cases, but of *general* principles included in those special instances which are recorded for our admonition ; and applicable by the heaven-directed judgment of the devoutly pondering



Christian to all cases as they arise. Wherein the difference is our advantage. We gain thereby a general guide through all the paths of life ; and we are raised, moreover, from the mere blind obedience to specific laws which may be yielded by a servant or a child, to that intelligent following out of general principles which is the reasonable service of a freely acting man. " We are delivered from the law, being dead to that wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." It is the law of Spiritual wisdom, no longer pealing trumpet-tongued amidst the terrors of Sinai but breathing forth its still small voice into the hushed and meditative conscience, which now directs our course. It is in the sanctified judgment of the Church of Christ that we may now realize the prophetic promise, " Ye shall hear a word behind you saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left." " My son, keep thy father's commandments and forsake not the law of thy mother ; bind them continually upon thy heart and tie them about thy neck ; when thou goest it shall lead thee, when thou sleepest it shall keep thee, when thou awakest *it shall talk with thee !*"

Did (for instance) the Lord God talk with Adam and Eve in the garden, and they " heard his voice ?" Even so will he talk with you if you devoutly listen

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to the echo of that voice conveyed—yea and ten thousand times re-echoed—in his sacred Scriptures. Did the word of the Lord come to Abraham in a vision saying, Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward? In the Bible does that same word come to you if you are walking in the steps of Abraham's faith; and you too therefore may trust in it as your own. Did God call to Samuel on his bed, and this again and again while yet the inexperienced youth was ignorant of the heavenly origin of the voice? Just so does he call to you, (and O how patiently and perseveringly!) waiting for the moment when your spirit shall be disengaged from earthly sounds, and hushed into attention, and instructed in the meaning of the sacred summons. And therefore to that voice you may reply,—as directly as did Samuel when thus taught to “know the Lord,” with as intense a feeling of the divine presence,—“Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth!” Did God reveal himself directly to Moses and the Israelites, to Elijah and the prophets, to Paul and the Apostles? The same God now reveals himself *by their recorded words* to me and you, and we may cry with them “Behold, the Lord our God hath showed us his glory and his greatness!”

Take then the revelations of the Bible as made, in all their permanent essence, to yourself. Feel

that you have part and lot in all that God has given to cheer and guide his ignorant and sinful creatures ; remember that even the historical occurrences recorded “ happened unto them for ensamples, and are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come ; ” and throw yourself back into the scenes and circumstances of the olden time, not as a spectator merely but a deeply interested sharer of the revelation made. Help your sluggish conception by every accessory thought that may give reality and vividness to the facts recorded by the sacred writers. Place yourself in imagination under the frowning precipice of Sinai. Stand with Elijah in the entrance of that awful cave, when there swept by it the mysterious “ still small voice.” Follow Jesus, with the multitude who “ pressed upon him for to hear him.” Sit with them at his feet around the beautiful mount of the beatitudes near Capernaum. Enter with the disciples into the upper chamber where they supped with their affectionate Master and received his parting exhortations. Lie prostrate by the side of Saul when he heard the voice from heaven, and trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Make thus the Bible as familiar and inward to your mind as the scenes of your boyhood, and the dreams of your youth ; lose yourself in its realities ; identify yourself with its occurrences ; “ pour

out" (as has been beautifully written) "your whole undivided heart before the oracles of God; give your enlarged spirit to the communion of his word; when it blames be you blamed, when it exhorts be you exhorted; when it condescends to argument, by its arguments be you convinced; be free to take all its moods and to catch all its inspirations;"\* and you will see it all transparent with the radiance of present Deity; you will find it resonant to you of the voice of the Most High; and you will receive its several communications, "not as the word of men but, as it is in truth, *the word of God* which effectually worketh in them that believe."

And thus consulting the word of God, you will find it your guide your counsellor and your own familiar friend. You may bring to it your perplexities, and find it answering for you many a harassing enquiry. You may bring to it your heart, and find it speaking home thereto direction, warning, peace. Even as Abraham was permitted to commune with the Lord about the doom of Sodom, and though but dust and ashes to inquire, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" even as Habakkuk the Prophet stood upon his watch and set himself upon the tower to watch and see what God would say unto him and what he should answer when he was reproved; so may the devout

\* Irving's Orations.

man carry up all his difficulties to the word of God, and derive from it the *satisfactory decision*, if not the *full solution*, of the questions which the facts of nature, the march of events, the history of man, the complicated riddle of the world, may raise within his mind. Not indeed that he will expect to *understand* the ways of God (for what child can understand his Father? what uninitiated man can penetrate the mystery of even the commonest art?) but that he will learn the *principles* on which they are arranged. Still less that he will turn the sacred page into a horoscope for forecasting private or political fortunes; or *dip* into the holy volume to discover what special answers may turn up to special questions about doctrine or practice; or bring to it his selfish yearnings in the hope of getting their indulgence authorized by some oracular reply; or endeavour to transplant the recorded sentiments and actions proper to some men on some occasions, root and branch into his own bosom and his own conduct—all this would be only playing over again the heathen game of Superstition in a new field—but that in the Wisdom of God he will discover *the seeds of things*, the principles of the divine character, the examples of the divine procedure, the declarations of the divine will, guided by which he may adore and acquiesce in, even when he cannot comprehend, the government of God.

These are to him far more than heathen oracles, far better than philosophical speculation, far surer than political cunning. "When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto wizards that peep and mutter, should not a people seek unto their God? *To the law and to the testimony*; if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them." "Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way."

## SECTION III.

## DEVOTIONAL FELLOWSHIP.

THERE is nothing more false, and more unjust to true religion, than to imagine that it stunts the growth of the human mind and withdraws it from the genial atmosphere of social life, in which alone it can blossom and bear fruit, into the withering privacy of selfish pride or moody fancy. The fact is, on the contrary, that pious sentiments, like all others that are great and good, *require* social intercourse for their full development, press naturally out to seek a kindred feeling in our fellow-men, and find their full expression and enjoyment only when re-echoed and intensified by sympathy. And therefore some of the most important exercises of the pious mind are those which are supplied by mutual interchange of thought, and blending of emotion, in the friendly family and public worship of Almighty God. Fellowship with others the mind must have in order to its due development ; this fellowship the world cannot supply ; but in the family of Christ it may be found.

It is important to consider this point, for if there is one thing which specially characterizes Christianity in its relation to mankind above all other forms of piety, it is its spirit of brotherly affection, and its means and ordinances for mutual edification. It is specially the religion of "the *spirit*," the mind and reason ; and it supplies by its social organization the only atmosphere in which the highest products of the mind and reason can be unfolded.

Remember then, that the very first condition of human improvement and human happiness is fellowship with our kind. Without Society we should not be men. With all our senses faculties and susceptibilities, and with every opportunity in external nature for their exercise, that exercise would not take place to any extent without the relations of social life. It is on the mother's bosom and in the father's arms that the infant begins to *feel*, before it is *acquainted with*, the best experiences of its nature. It is in the family circle, the friendly neighbourhood, the ever widening sphere of social sympathies, that we learn to know ourselves, our powers, our wants, our joys, our hopes. And therefore no happy condition of mankind has ever been imagined in which the idea of society and sociableness was not a prominent one. The depth of all conceivable misery is pictured by banishment to a solitary rock, unknown unpitied unsympathized



with, where the craving heart eats inward and devours itself. And the height of all conceivable happiness is imagined in the finding our own mind reflected from the mind of multitudes around us, our own thoughts reciprocated, our own sentiments re-echoed, in some vast community actuated by one will and beating as with one pulse. Till Society was provided, Paradise itself was insufficient for human happiness. "The Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone ; I will make him an help meet for him." And in the full perfection of Society consists the blessedness of the predicted kingdom of Christ. It is when the mystical body of the second Adam is completed, and the Fulness of the Deity—the sphere of the holy ones in light in which he dwells and through which he diffuses his especial presence—is perfected by the re-union of the whole family in heaven and earth; it is when thus "in the dispensation of the fulness of times he shall have gathered together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth ;" that "the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people and God himself shall be with them and be their God." Out of many to make one ; out of infinitely various parts to form a full harmonious whole ; this is the grand design of God, this is the happiness to which he destines

man. Everything that is separate and separately exercised shall pass away, but the communion of love shall be eternal. Prophecies shall fail, tongues shall cease, knowledge shall vanish away, but *Charity never faileth*.

But forget not that such union and communion can never be supplied by the common intercourse of an irreligious world. I know that it is in the world that this development of mind and heart is specially sought. I know that it is because of this and of the gratification which accompanies it, that the world is, especially by the young and ardent, so diligently worshipped. And I grant, moreover, that such intercourse does bring out the buds of feeling ; that its influence on the mind is such as for a time to seem sufficient for its growth and happiness. An almost universal welcome greets the new guest in the halls of social pleasure, and winning sympathy comes forth to meet his timid thoughts and to solicit them into complete development. Every countenance smiles upon him. Every hand is extended to him. It is the spring-time—the warm fresh early spring-time—of his being, and truly does he find

“The genial season hath such power,  
His very heart seems blossoming,  
Each thought a fragrant flower.”

But who has ever found this spring eternal ?

Whose heart has not shrunk and withered under the chilling blasts which soon begin to sweep across it? Who has given his youthful confidence to a much-promising world, and has not been fooled and disappointed, yea betrayed, yea mocked perhaps for his simplicity? Society is a necessity of our nature. Not a mere gathering together of multitudes, an aggregation of persons, but an interchange of thought, an assimilation of minds. Such society this world boasts to be possessed of, and professes to throw open to the inexperienced youth. But such society it does not give. There is union without unity; association without assortment; connexion without conjunction; a seeming whole composed of incongruous parts; straw in amber; iron and clay; and they "cannot cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." The attractive power of the social principle is more than balanced by the repulsive power of the selfish principle. Each man, while he seems to lose himself in others is at the same time carefully pursuing his own particular end; and he unites with those around him not to adopt *their* ends and further them, (which is the idea of true benevolence,) but to use them for his own end and subordinate them to himself.

And O the blight which settles on the opening mind and dries it up into a harsh misanthropy,

when this true character of worldly intercourse becomes unveiled ! Life becomes a blank. Expectation dies away. The heart gets seared. Disappointment produces indignation. And indignation (like all intense emotion) argues from the particular to the universal, and pronounces all creation barren, all hope a mockery, all the best affections an unreal show. Men find their hearts befooled by a deceitful world, and they go on to shut and bar them against God himself. They have no susceptibility for his tenderness, no ear for his invitations of compassion by Jesus Christ ; the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint. And the solitariness which they find amidst a crowded world is increased a thousand-fold by the solitariness of their own hearts. They have no home within to which to fly from the neglects of outward life. They have no friend in the bosom into whose ear to pour their complaints. Despoiled of confidence in man and ignorant of confidence in God, empty, desolate, *alone*—O what shall the poor baffled spirit do to reach its proper destination ? How shall it be saved from moral death and everlasting barrenness ? Where shall it find its proper nourishment and expand into its proper magnitude ?

Where but in the bosom of the Church of Christ ? How but by the infusion of the new creating Spirit of Life ? By what appliances but by immersion in

that atmosphere of the Spirit which is formed around the sacred circles of friendly and family and public prayer? From intercourse with Christian men will he catch the *spirit* of that intercourse. Some one thought will be awakened; some one feeling, melted by the warm breath of a generous sympathy, will begin again to flow. Imaginations long dead, desires long smothered, hopes long scorned, will once more lift their head. He will listen like an exile to the long-forgotten sounds of his mother tongue. He will feel that he is still a man, and that in humanity there lies enveloped something more than human, which may still be cherished into life. The avenues to his interior soul will once again be opened, and "when the full tide of devotion has entered the channel thus prepared for it, he will hail its coming with joy, and bathe his whole spirit in those purifying and strengthening waters."\*

In the church of Christ then—the holy family of God—is there full provision made for the development of the social principle in human nature, and thereby for the raising it to all the excellence and happiness for which it was destined. The social exercises of religion are the effectual means of awakening nourishing and diffusing abroad the Spiritual life. And to promote these exercises

\* H. J. Rose.

Christians have been formed by their divine Master into a religious community, associated for a common purpose, animated in its pursuit by a common feeling, and contributing to its attainment a common help. Jesus knew the pressing necessities of the human mind when he called men, not from brotherhood to loneliness, not from fulness into vanity, but from the community of darkness and disappointment to another community which dwells in light and breathes through its members love and joy. Of this community he formed the rudiments when he selected from the multitude twelve men who should be with him constantly and imbibe his Spirit, and become by it assimilated to him and to each other. And the unity of this society he solemnly enjoined them to preserve when he said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." This unity he provided for when he said to the Father, "the glory that thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." For the maintenance of this unity, even in the fullest enlargement of the church and the comprehension therein of all sorts and conditions of men, he interceded when he said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also that shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as

thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

And accordingly we find that the personal removal of their Head did not dissolve the Society which he had formed. The disciples were all "*assembled together*" on the first day of the week, when Jesus appeared among them and said, Peace be unto you. After his ascension moreover they "*continued all with one accord* in prayer and supplication with the women and with the brethren." And when subsequently there were added to the church three thousand souls, we find this enlarged community "*continuing steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers ; and all that believed were together and had all things common, and they continuing daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people.*"

Nor need I add how frequently St. Paul refers to this grand principle of social unity, and presses it on those to whom he writes. Even when the church was enlarged to the very boundaries of the then civilized world, even when it comprised persons of every country and of every rank in life, and was composed of such discordant elements as Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians, slaves

and freemen, still this is the law of its being and the condition of its growth, that it shall "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," and come thereby "in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." The very sacraments of the church symbolize this spiritual union. The very ordinances by which men are received into the body and from time to time proclaim their connexion with it, declare as fully conjunction with the *members* of this community as with its sacred *Head*. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female ; for *ye are all one in Jesus Christ*." "For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free ; and have been all made to drink into one spirit." O the full provision for the noblest exercises of the mind, which is afforded by the Church of Christ ! O the blessed interchange of thought and feeling and enjoyment, by which the Spiritual life expands and grows ! There is such a thing as Christian fellowship and love ; as merging the particular will in the general will ; as looking not at our own interests but at the interests of others ; as rejoicing with them that rejoice and



weeping with them that weep ; and there is more essential fellowship in the most imperfect intercourse of spiritual Christians, than in all the closest oath-bound combinations of the world.

Let the Christian therefore diligently cultivate this important means of grace in all its parts ; in the private sphere of his Family and Friends, and in the public sphere of the Congregation.

For with his Family and among his Friends, is the Christian bound to share, and by sharing to increase, his devout affections. The whole amount of Spiritual life existing in the church of Christ is given and held for diffusion and reciprocation. Even as the Apostle tells the Corinthians touching their temporal treasures, that he wishes an equality, that their abundance may supply the want of others and the abundance of others may be reciprocally a supply for them ; as it is written, He that gathered much had nothing over and he that gathered little had no lack : so, much more, should it be with those Spiritual treasures which we receive from our common Head. There are innumerable degrees of life among the members of the Lord. There are all the stages from simple consecration to him, to the fullest union. And to be helpers of each other's faith throughout these several stages, to become by mutual communication joint partakers of one common Spirit, is one of the most effectual means of

Spiritual growth. He that watereth is watered himself. He that diligently instructs his children and servants in the word of God, and with them approaches day by day to the throne of God in prayer ; he that determines with the courageous Joshua " as for me and my house we will serve the Lord ;" he that, like the devout Cornelius, " calls together his kinsmen and near friends," reminding them that they are " present before God to hear all things that are commanded them of God ;" —his spirit becomes twice blessed, his principles are strengthened by reflection from the mind of other men, his conscience made more bold and powerful by the echoing of its dictates, his heart warmed and animated by sympathy with its emotions, and his ties and obligations to consistency and watchfulness increased a thousand-fold. A mutual encouragement is unconsciously afforded, a mutual check is unconsciously established, and we get the habit of considering in every temptation to weakness or indulgence, How will this harmonize with the publicly expressed devotion of the morning family prayer ? or how will the remembrance of it increase the shame and the compunction of the evening confession ? how should we speak and act in all the business of life towards those with whom we have taken sweet counsel together in its devout refreshments ? how shall we take care that the character

which we have together contemplated as worthy of a Christian man, shall be found not altogether forgotten, yea steadily exhibited, in our daily spirit and conduct? God knoweth, we need every sort of help, we want manifold and complicated motives, for growing in grace and adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things!

And how then shall we praise God enough for those further helps which he has afforded to our growth in spirituality, in the public sphere of the Congregation! Who can recall however faintly to his recollection, all that his mind owes to the ordinances of the Sanctuary, and not adore that gracious Master who has provided such means of grace, and love that church which has administered them to him? It almost startles us when we attempt to trace the process of formation of our present mind, to see how gradually how secretly and by what various helps it has been fashioned up to what it now is; and of this process how very much we may refer to the public prayers the public instructions and the public sympathies of the Church in which we have been brought up. Some religious sentiments indeed we get from parents friends and public opinion; some are sown in us by books; some spring up of themselves from reflection, and are matured by the events of life. But still, were it possible to analyse minutely so complicated a

production as the human mind, how large a part of its best principles and feelings would have to be referred to the public ministrations which have been afforded to us in the house of God. Even with respect to the Bible itself — that great source of all religious truth—where was our interest for it excited? where were our inquiries into it assisted? our perplexities concerning it relieved? where, above all, was the personal application of it to our heart and soul effected, but in the house of God? There have its truths and principles, well known perhaps before, become transformed from a dead letter into lively oracles, and been set home with demonstration of the Spirit and of power. There have we found God himself speaking to us by the voice of his Ambassadors, and their words have fallen like living sparks upon our mind and kindled in it faith and love and adoration. And there too, what clearness and vigour have been communicated to our thoughts which were obscure, and our feelings which were weak and inefficient! What new force infused into our oldest conceptions; what new tracks opened out for the after course of our private meditations; what energy conveyed into the inner man! We have seen as with a new understanding, we have felt as with a new heart, we have purposed and attempted as with a new will. Our own soul has become partaker of the life that

breathed forth from the souls of others. We have been absorbed into the swelling stream of kindred minds, and we have felt that there is but "one body and one spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling; one Lord one faith one baptism one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in us all."

In public worship therefore must we cherish what in public worship has been awakened. By regular conscientious attendance on its prayers its sermons and its Holy Communion, shall we best exercise and strengthen the Spiritual life. Nay, this life *cannot but seek* the opportunities of public devotion; it finds its full enjoyment chiefly there. That awful sense of the Divine Majesty and that filial confidence in the Divine Mercy which form the primary elements of Piety, where are they experienced so richly as in the congregation of the Saints? For each child of God possesses these emotions as the characteristics of his renewed mind. And each child of God therefore brings with him these emotions to the house of God, longing to find therein companions in their blessedness, and to increase their force and their enjoyment by mutual communication. Public devotion is the out-burst and diffusion of private devoutness. It is one heart summoning another to its aid. It results from feeling the impossibility of expressing as we wish our feelings, and therefore

calling upon others to help us out in that expression. It is the bringing the faint quivering fitful spark of piety which lies smouldering in our own hearts, that it may catch new vigour from the similar spark in others, and together burst into the steady flame of grateful sacrifice ascending straight and strong to heaven. That spirit therefore which forms the essence of the parts will form the essence of the whole. That which breathes however faintly in the bosom of the individual Christian, will breathe in all its vigour through the body of the faithful.

Is it not so specially in the service of the Church of England? Do not that mingled Reverence and Confidence which form the essence of Piety, breathe through all her forms of Prayer? We approach God as his people, consecrated to him in Christ, baptized into his holy family, and therefore privileged to pour out our hearts before him as our Father. Yet we come as men who have alas! abused those privileges, forgotten this relation, dishonoured this family, and breathing therefore the most touching feelings of humiliation that any human composition can give utterance to. Witness the "general Confession to be said of the whole Congregation all kneeling;" and still more that to which we are called before the table of the Lord, "meekly kneeling on our knees." Nothing in them

is forced, nothing affected, nothing grovelling and mean, nothing violating the decencies due to human nature even in its degradation; and yet, O how full how deep how well adapted to *indicate* at least if it cannot *express*, the most intense compunction of the penitent heart!

Thus then does our service *begin*; with giving utterance to and thus increasing the penitential Awe with which the sinful child should come before his Holy Father. But then a change comes gradually on. The strain of sorrow is relieved by occasional notes of hope; and there are sounds of pardon and absolving grace commingled with it; and from these steal forth the cheering supplication "Our *Father* which art in heaven;" and then comes the prayer of hopeful dependence "O Lord, open *Thou* our lips;" till at last the very soul of Confidence is wakened up and bursts aloud into the chant of unchecked adoration, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!" "Praise ye the Lord! The Lord's name be praised!" And then the sister feelings, each now set free to run its course, go on together in linked harmony intertwining all their notes—now one prevailing now another,—now soft, now loud, now quick, now slow,—but the theme, the blessed theme! of Christian Devoutness still preserved throughout, and every string within the heart awak-

ened and every feeling touched through all its  
chords, till there is felt

“One life within us and around us,  
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere.”



## CHAPTER III.

## DEVOUT EXERCISES OF HEART.

By the heart, in this connexion, I mean the seat of those emotions which are stirred within us by the sense of personal interest and well-being;—the pleasure of possessing, and the pain of being without, a seeming good; the hopes and fears of future advantage or disadvantage, and all the joys and sorrows which accompany their excitement. These emotions in the irreligious man are vivid and unruly in proportion to the natural temperament, and they exhaust the energies on the unsatisfactory and ever-changing objects of a transitory world. But it is the privilege of the Christian to reduce all their fluctuations under the moderating influence of faith in God. It is one great element of Piety to exercise Dependence on our Father's care, and by recognition of his all-pervading and controlling hand to possess our souls in patience. And this essential element of the Spiritual life must be nourished by that "prayer and supplication with thanksgiving" which stills the beatings of the foolish

heart by "making known our requests to God," and leaving them with him to be decided on according to his wisdom ; which consists therefore not merely in a meditative recognition and enjoyment of His presence, but in a habit of referring all things up to his disposal and of waiting on him daily with a child-like trust.

Now of all the pure fresh feelings of early youth which make us love to look upon it, and which sustain our reverence and affection for human nature notwithstanding its corruption, the most engaging is that simplicity of Trust, that ready unreflecting Dependence, which we see a child repose upon a Parent's love and a Parent's care. To feel a sorrow and to communicate that sorrow to its Father's ear, to experience a want and to bring that want to be relieved by its Father's hand, are to the simple child simultaneous movements of the heart. It knows itself only in connexion with its Father ; it has no experience of pain or pleasure that does not centre itself in him ; it looks up to him for explanation of every difficulty, flies to him in every danger, rests on him with quiet confidence in his power to protect, and folded in his arms can look round with a steady eye upon a threatening world.

But as a little child towards its Father, so is the Christian privileged to feel towards God. "Piety,"

observes the Swiss Reformer, Zwingle, "is a word applied as well between parents and their children as between God and man. And that *adherence of the heart* by which a man relies without wavering on God as the only good who alone can soothe his sorrows, alone avert from him all evils or turn them to his good, and thus regards him as a Father, this is piety; this is religion." And Prayer therefore as the exercise and thereby the nourishment, of Piety, consists, in the first place, in *referring up to God all our sorrows and our joys*.

For the essence of Devoutness consists in recognizing God as working all in all. Not only as present with all things and the ground of their being; nor as actuating all things by his universal life; but as the Ordainer and Controller the sovereign disposer of every event. No event we are sure can happen, no more than any being can exist, but by his permission and appointment; not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Father. And consequently whatever be the various *appearances* of things to the human eye, they are all essentially wise and good; the rays of light may take a thousand colours and shades of colour from the surfaces they fall upon; but they are all alike pure colourless emanations from the bounteous Sun. True this is a mysterious fact. But the child of God has learned to live by faith and not by sight, and

therefore he is satisfied with knowing that *so it is*.

And it is *practically necessary* to him that he should believe this. He cannot do without it. The doctrine of a God is nothing to his peace without this. He *must* refer every event to God's appointment, or he cannot escape despondency in trouble and presumption in prosperity.\* If from any other source than from *my Father* comes the calamity which pains me, I must crouch down under it in despair. If from any other source than from *my Father* comes the prosperity which exhilarates me, I shall give back to that source the homage of my praise. If there is more than one ultimate cause of all events then is there more than one independent being ; and to more than one the hopes and fears of a dependent creature must direct themselves. But the Christian has turned from idols to serve the living and true God ; he has ceased to stop at secondary causes because he has had revealed to him the Great First Cause ; to him there is but One God the Father, of whom are all things and we in him ; and therefore he receives his sorrow and his joy as sent by Him, and Him alone.

\* It has been my rule to make every person and thing which has acted on my natural feeling a subject of daily prayer ; and you cannot think what tenderness, what peace and comfort have ensued.—REV. H. WILHY.

And hence his warrant for prayer and praise. All supplicatory prayer has no basis but the fact of the particular immediate all-directing and controlling Providence of God. Only as we recognize the hand of God shall we lay hold of it. Only as we see him everywhere shall we depend upon him everywhere, and rejoice in him everywhere. The *manner* of his presence and control is indeed, and ever must be, far beyond our ken, but the *fact* of it we must believe, or prayer is a delusion and thanksgiving but an empty form.

Does then seeming *evil* press upon the Christian ? He recognizes it as coming from *his Father*, and therefore he believes it to be real good. He learns from Jeremiah that "out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth both evil and good ;" and from Isaiah that "He forms the light and creates darkness, He makes peace and creates evil ; He, the Lord, doeth all these things." He asks with Job "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil ?" And therefore he exclaims like him "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away—blessed be the name of the Lord !" Even as the tempest and the earthquake and the thunderbolt are witnesses of God, as much as are the fruitful seasons and the rain from heaven which fill our hearts with food and gladness ; even as the cloudy pillar as well as the light of fire was a symbol

of his presence ; so through the darkest equally as the brightest atmosphere it is the Christian's privilege to behold his guiding and guarding God. And thus Prayer becomes the utterance of implicit acquiescence ; and its language is that of the Divine Sufferer—"The cup which *my Father* hath given me, shall I not drink it ?"

On the other hand, does Prosperity dilate the heart with joy ? That heart expands towards God—that joy breathes forth the incense of its adoration before the mercy seat. The Christian rises from admiration of the gift to gratitude towards the Giver. He passes through all secondary causes till his full heart reaches Him who has disposed and actuated all, and he exclaims "The *Lord* hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad !" "Second causes," says Zwingle, "are rather *means* and *instruments*, than properly speaking *causes*. It is not really the earth that brings forth or the water that nourishes, the air that fertilizes or the fire that warms or the sun that animates ; but it is HE that is the source the life and the support of all things, who uses these various instruments and by them works their several effects. He feeds the varied fruits of the earth by the element of water ; refreshes fills and makes them grow by the air ; ripens and gives them beauty mellows and perfects them by the sun. When therefore we see the parent earth putting forth her corn, the

tree bearing his fruit, the sun shedding light and warmth around, let us as much realize the hand of God ministering all these things to us, as we do that of a kind Father when we see him give a cluster of grapes to his beloved child."

But not only so. Not only does the prayerful heart acquiesce in all its trials as God's appointment, and rejoice in all its blessings as God's gifts ; but along with and in each passing feeling of sorrow or of joy it maintains a sober *waiting upon God*, as unchangeably the same amidst the various vicissitudes of life. The particular emotion, be it pleasurable or painful, is almost merged—at least it is much modified—in the sense of general dependence on the never-failing providence of God. Our feelings may vary but our convictions are constant. The lower heavens may be clear or may be cloudy, and we must necessarily feel the difference ; but the upper are eternally serene. The *light* of the sun may be withdrawn and then a gloom comes over us ; or it may shine forth brilliantly and then we are full of joy ; but still, the *life* of the Sun, the vital warmth which streams from him unseen, remains enough for our existence in the darkest midnight even as in the brightest noon-day glory. Christian, forget not this. Think not that God is gone from you because he is shrouded from your sight. Rejoice indeed in his appearance, as an added blessing ; but despond not

at his seeming absence, for in Him you still do live and move. All events are transient and changeable as the hues of heaven,—one instant there is brightness, and another gloom ; and therefore be not greatly lifted up in the moment of prosperity, nor cast down in the hour of adversity ; but in both alike remember whence result the *shadows* as well as the *lights* which are so variously flung on every object, and wait on Him who is “the Father of lights, with whom is *no variableness neither shadow of turning*.”

But dependent prayer consists secondly, in *laying before God our fears and hopes*. For it refers to God the future as well as the present. Our anticipated pains and pleasures as well as our experienced ones, it moderates and sanctifies by the thought of God. We cannot but look onward to the future with various emotions. It is the prerogative of mind to look before as well as after, to crowd the present with conceptions of the future as well as of the past, to try and sum the series of coming events. But those events can never be correctly calculated. We know not the law of their progression. We can only conjecture from existing causes probable results. We can but hope or fear. And O how miserable is that mind which has to bear and balance these conflicting and continually fluctuating feelings, by itself alone ! which is ever wan-



dering in the uncertain region of the probable, and according to its present tinge looks out, with sanguine expectation or with gloomy dread upon the dim expanse of things to come ! We may seem to see the future stretching out before us ; but who can trust in his ability to direct his course therein aright ? We are hurrying onward down the current of events and launching out into an unknown sea, without a pilot and without a chart. And what then *can* men do without a spirit of dependence upon God ? How *can* they brave, with nothing but their own short-sighted plans and puny power, the dangers of that untried ocean ! I do confess I cannot understand how peace can be maintained a moment without that waiting upon God, that simple leaving matters in his hands, which is exercised and nourished in dependent Prayer. Prayer takes the several anticipations which disturb us, and tells them out to God. Prayer goes up to his presence as Hezekiah went into the temple with the threatenings of Sennacherib, and spreads them before the Lord. And thus prayer devolves our burden upon God, in the certain confidence that he will sustain it. "Take no thought for the morrow," says our Divine Master, "for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." For our *duties* indeed, prospective as well as immediate, we should be continually taking thought ( for

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virtue is deliberation, and is made up of circumspection and foresight), but not for all the possible *events* which our teeming imagination may suggest to us. Duties are ours, and therefore we must consider and provide for them. But events are God's, and therefore we may thankfully leave them in his hands.

And Prayer enables us to do this. It makes man and things recede, and it brings forward God. It changes the alarmed inquiry, What shall I do hereafter? into the submissive question, What wilt Thou have me to do now? It turns our thoughts from wearying conjecture to hopeful action. It draws the curtain over the undistinguishable prospect and brings us to sit down and *wait* for its clearing up; wait peacefully, because it is not chance which is at work but God; wait patiently, because his work he will accomplish in his time. *He* will make all things work together for good to them that love him. He will bring the blind by a way they have not known. He will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight. Christian reader, be not curious about the future, but commit your way unto the Lord and he shall bring it to pass. Trust him for whatever interests you—your health, your comfort, your support, your family, your friends, your reputation, and your life. Be not dismayed by the shadows of coming evil. Even what seems to you

unavoidable is but a small part (O how inconceivably small!) of God's whole purpose towards you. You look out only on the immediate future; and you forget the infinite futures which stretch on behind that future. You see before you perhaps necessary effects of now existing causes; but you consider not that those effects will in their turn become causes of still subsequent effects, which may be altogether of a different character. Events must never be estimated in themselves alone but in their relations, their innumerable ramifications, their interminable sequences. But those relations are every moment changing. God is every instant modifying them. And therefore an occurrence which to-day lowers upon us as an evil, we may see to-morrow brightening up into a good. Out of the bitter root will spring the medicinal leaf or fragrant blossom. From the gloomy cloud may fall the fructifying shower, and this again give place to the enlivening Sun. Besides—suppose certain sequences of things to be indeed inevitable; suppose that pious wisdom rightly calculates concerning them and that they *will come*. They will not, and they cannot, come *exactly as they now present themselves to our imagination*. We are looking only on one class of objects, all modified and coloured by our present humour; but they will be surrounded when they come and thereby be modified, by un-

imaginable other objects. We calculate on meeting them with the feeling which oppresses us at present ; but we forget that we ourselves are changeable, and that our state of mind in actual contact with the future may be altogether different from that with which we are now anticipating it. Above all we are looking at them as *distinct from God* ; let loose to work their fury on us at their will ; careering in the untamed wildness of tumultuous chance : but what does faith assure to us ? what will prayer enable us to feel ? what will the spirit of a trustful and a hopeful child be satisfied of ? That when they do come, *God also will come with them* ; grasp them in his mighty hand ; adjust them by his wisdom ; turn them at his gracious will ; ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm !

And therefore thirdly, a yet higher spirit of dependent prayer will be *the general commendation of ourselves into the hands of God*. All reference to him of our occasional joys or sorrows, all taking up to him particular hopes or fears, will form in us an *habitual* sense of being not alone for our Father is with us ; an habitual conviction (and O how marvellous a one it is !)

———“ that we and our affairs  
Are part of a Jehovah’s cares.”

For there are many moods of mind in which both pleasure and pain and fear and hope exert but little

influence on us ; in which the spirit inclines but little towards the past or future but seems balanced in itself ; in which we feel with David " Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison with thee !"—" The Lord is my portion, saith my soul !" This feeling, in proportion as it becomes habitual to us, affords not only a remedy but a preventive of anxiety. It does not merely restore, it *preserves* the balance of the mind. Just as we are conscious of reliance on a friend even when not obliged to ask his help ; just as we turn instinctively to him at the first glimpse of necessity, and thus the earliest movements of alarm are quelled ; so the thought of God our Father affords to the habitually dependent mind the gravitating influence, which retains the struggling imaginations in their proper orbit and prevents their rushing onwards through infinity. This is to " pray without ceasing." This is what St. Paul refers to as the Christian's grand support, in that perplexed condition of mind in which desire and supplication hope and fear are silenced by the very impossibility of conjecturing what may be the will of God, when he tells the Romans, " The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered ;" that is, with secret undeveloped aspirations, with thoughts

too deep for words. When conception fails us, and mental life cannot express itself in verbal forms ; when the spirit retires from the images of sense and the creations of fancy and all the workings of the understanding, deep into itself ; has nothing specific to ask because it feels its utter inability to form a definite wish ; lies passive in those everlasting arms which it is sensible are underneath it ; and breathes out simply " Into thy hands I commend myself, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth ;" O this is the sabbath of the soul ! this is " waiting on the God of our salvation all the day !" This is Faith—Faith in its highest power and noblest exercise ; which asks not a disclosure of the future but is satisfied with having no one object visible but God ; which desires no clearer vision of the distant shore but looks forth on the vast unvaried ocean of futurity, calm and hopeful though not a speck may be distinguished on it, nay though clouds and darkness rest upon it, assured that over the abyss the Spirit of love and life sits brooding. O for this sacred calm of soul ! this holy hush of the collected mind ! this losing of our petty self in the immensity of being, and reclining on the bosom of the Infinite with this one single feeling, " I wait upon the Lord,—my soul doth wait !"

## CHAPTER IV.

## DEVOUT EXERCISES OF WILL

WE have seen already that there can be no true Piety which does not affect the Will, nay have its seat and throne in the Will, renewing it into harmony with the will of God. We cannot conceive a child of God having a will at variance with his Father's will, or even indifferent thereto. There can be no true delight in God's presence, nor dependence on his help, where there is not also devotion to his service. He that has received the spirit of adoption at all, must have received it, however feeble in degree yet complete in kind. He must possess therefore with whatever fluctuations, a general desire and purpose to honour God's name, to walk worthy of Him who has called him to his kingdom and glory, and to become perfect as his Father which is in heaven is perfect. In a word, to use the expression of our Lord concerning his Apostles, (Matt. xxvi. 41,) "his spirit must be willing"—his purposes must cordially harmonize with those of God and he must be ready to do his will. It was so with those Disciples even amidst their heedlessness their rashness their ignorance of

themselves and their dulness towards the warnings of their master. They had no *treachery of heart* towards him (as, alas ! the absent Judas had), but meant all that they said when they exclaimed, "Though we should die with thee yet will we not deny thee." And so will it be with all who are "transformed by the renewing of their mind, that they may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

But then with this "spirit which is willing," there is still about the Christian "the flesh which is weak;" — the prejudices preferences appetites and passions of his old and lower nature; and these are continually opposing his new and higher purpose, seeking to mislead it to enfeeble it or at least to clog its efforts. We see this in those same Disciples. The very men who were at one moment full of generous zeal for their Divine Master are soon found "sleeping, for their eyes were heavy!" The very Apostle who now is ready to go with his Lord to prison and to death is within the hour forsaking him and flying; nay shrinking from the mention of his name; nay protesting with an oath, "I do not know the man!" The best intentions are forgotten; the most dilated zeal collapses to a point; the most resolute determinations have slunk away; the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. And who does not confess that so it is with every Christian? Who is not compelled to cry continually



with bitter self-reproach, "The things that I would I do not, and the things that I would not those I do!"

Here therefore we perceive the strong necessity of Prayer, as a means of exercising and thereby strengthening the Will. It was to this that Jesus directed his Disciples as their great preservative in the coming trial—"Watch and *pray*, that ye enter not into temptation." He knew their willing spirit and he loved them. But he knew too their weaker flesh and he was fearful for them. He endeavours therefore to arouse them to a sense of their spiritual danger, and to the earnest seeking of that divine strength without which they must fall. And herein does he teach us that in Prayer lies all moral power. By constant bringing of our will under the eye and influence of God must we reduce it into harmony with His.

And this, Prayer enables us to do by *settling our judgment of what is the will of God* in each particular case. However honest our desire to please our heavenly Father, we are continually in danger of mistake concerning *what* will please him. The general principles of God's will are it is true set forth by him in his Holy Word, and enforced by the responsive voice of his Spirit in the heart. But when we come to act out the details of duty, we are in danger either of *forgetting* those principles, through the prevalence of a crowd of selfish

worldly maxims of the Understanding which judges not according to the grand ideas of Faith but according to the mean suggestions of Sense, not according to the Distant and Unseen but according to the Visible and Immediate ; or of *misapplying* those principles, through the perplexity and ignorance of this same understanding which can only judge according to the evidence, obscure and meagre nay conflicting though it be, which may be brought before it ; and which therefore leads us into many an evil path and involves us in a thousand errors, before we are aware. It is therefore one thing to have a will for God, and quite another to have this will sufficiently *predominant* above all other wills, and sufficiently *enlightened* when predominant to direct our steps aright.

Now here our remedy is Prayer. Prayer, which does not merely seek for strength to execute our judgment (for that judgment may be wrong) ; but lays it open before God, that in his presence and with reference to his promised guidance we may form and settle that judgment. We are in danger of being hurried along by the conclusions—the rash perhaps and passionate conclusions—of the Understanding. Prayer brings us to a *pause*, that we may recollect What saith *the Lord* ? We are tossed perhaps upon a sea of troubles ; our prospect overcast, our land-marks gone, our reckoning at fault. Prayer runs to the compass and the chart  
✓ which God has given us, to find in what direction

we must steer. We are wavering between divergent trains of thought, each beckoning us in turn along its course. Prayer discloses some new object which at once decides their relative correctness. Prayer saves us from the judgment of our solitary self by reminding us of another than ourself, and of the *judgment* of that other, to modify our own. "Prayer," says Bishop Wilberforce,\* "brings us near to Him; and of his infinite condescension brings Him near to us. In Prayer, in real hearty earnest prayer, *all things around us are set in their proper places*. The earth and its interests shrink into their real insignificance. Time, and all its train of pleasures pains shame poverty honour and riches, what are these to one whose eye is on the great white throne, before whom lies the awful book of judgment, who sees heaven opened and Jesus standing on the right hand of God?" Who has not experienced the advantage of considering, in cases of perplexity, What would such or such a revered Friend think of this matter? How would *his* mind, untroubled by the personal considerations which disturb my own, decide? And what then is the privilege of thus referring to the mind of *God*? of waiting, with a growing sense of his immediate presence, for that calm serenity in which the slightest whisper of the conscience may be heard! In the very

\* Ordination Sermon at Oxford, Dec. 1845.

act of such re-arguing the case before. the quiet view of his piercing eye, our mind is gradually purifying ; all that is earthly sinks away ; all that is heavenly streams into the consciousness ; our subtle lusts slink off like unclean spirits at the coming dawn ; our holier principles start up from their sleep ; we find ourselves impelled against ourselves into another judgment ; and yet are conscious and are confident that this other is a better, and the right one. We have passed from the twilight of the Understanding into the noon of Reason, and Reason we feel is none other than the light of God.

“ Whene’er the mist that stands ’twixt God and thee  
Defecates to a pure transparency,  
That intercepts no light, and adds no stain—  
There Reason is, and then begins her reign !”

Nay, more than this. Prayer is not only meditation on our purposes under God’s all-purifying eye ; it is the communicating to him our inmost mind, spreading before him all our circumstances, recapitulating our reasonings, discoursing with him on our plans. And who knows not the value of discourse to modify what was crude and arbitrary, to clear up what was confused, to bring out our conclusions, clean and sharp ? “ Whosoever,” says Lord Bacon, “ hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up in the communicating and discoursing with another. He tosseth his thoughts more

easily, he marshalleth them more orderly, he seeth how they look when they are turned into words, and he waxeth wiser than himself, often more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation." Dear Christian Reader, would you "wax wiser than yourself" from day to day? Discourse with God in prayer! Submit to him your decisions. Talk with him of your purposes. Pray that by the influences of his Spirit you may have "a right judgment in all things." Beseech him so to "cleanse the thoughts of your heart by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit that you may perfectly love him and worthily magnify his holy name." Entreat that you may be "filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

But Prayer influences the Will, further, by *strengthening our Determination to do the will of God* when known. The willing spirit may exist but it may be dull and languid. It may clearly see its path but it may not be alert to enter vigorously upon that path. It requires to be roused and animated and propelled—to pass from being well inclined to being steadily determined to the service of God.

And this determination it obtains in Prayer. For Prayer not only brings the will of God distinct and

full before the *mind*, but it stimulates the *heart* to embrace that will and devote itself to its accomplishment. For who can look on sin without abhorrence, when he views it in the light of God's own countenance? Who can look on holiness without a yearning for its full possession and a deep resolve for its pursuit, when he gazes steadily on its surpassing beauty? We cannot purpose evil, we cannot but resolve for good, when we behold them as they are, in prayer. And hence the saying of the old divines that Prayer will make men give over sinning, or sinning will make them give over prayer. The two states of mind—as prolonged and settled states—are incompatible. We cannot “*think upon*” the things that are true and venerable and just and pure and lovely and of good report, without being won and carried away by them. The glow of admiration kindles into love, and love bursts forth into determination, and we go away from the presence of the Lord instinct with vigour in His cause. Look only at the contrast between those poor disciples, who with all their willingness of spirit neglected the admonition of their Lord and did not give themselves to Prayer, and the Holy Jesus who sought therein the life and power of God. As the last great trial drew nearer to him, he drew nearer to his Father. Once and twice and thrice he brought the fluctuating emotions of humanity under the assuaging influence of the Idea

which formed the living principle of his existence, and renewed and re-invigorated that Idea by immediate communing with God, till God's will alone possessed his soul; God's will breathed and burned in the very centre of his consciousness; subordinated every other thought into entire harmony of action with itself; and brought him back in calm untroubled majesty—in himself collected—saying to his astonished disciples, "Rise, let us be going; behold, he is at hand that doth betray me."

And this—something at least like this—is the effect of Prayer upon the will of those who bring it in its weakness to be inspired with power from heaven. What we have not in ourselves the Spirit of God supplies; and we gain more strength from prostrate supplication than from all the arguments and efforts that human ingenuity can devise. By the thoughts awakened in the mind and the feelings stirred within the heart amidst the awfulness of Prayer, the Holy Ghost descends into the will, and turns it whithersoever it should go and nerves it to high purposes and noble deeds. "In prayer" (I quote again the living and life-breathing testimony of the Bishop of Oxford), "our minds are armed for the coming temptations of the day; they are cooled, refreshed, and calmed after its vexations fatigues and anxiety. In it we can, even whilst compassed with infirmities, bring our own crooked or withered will into His presence who is the healer; and whose

word of power shall restore the shrunken sinews to their vigour and make him straight whom long infirmity had bowed down." And thus do we become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. We are strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. We find him doing exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, by His power working in us. We labour, striving according to his working which worketh in us mightily. We can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us. It is in *Spirit* that all power resides, throughout the Universe. Matter is weak, inert, passive, instrumental only. Spirit alone originates all change, is active, mighty, causative. And what then is the power of THE SPIRIT! What the strength to be derived into our will from His holy inspiration! Is it not as a cordial circulating through the frame? Brings it not secret refreshings which repair the strength, and fainting spirits uphold? Do we not awake by it as one out of sleep, and like a giant refreshed with wine? With our purpose clear before us and our hearts set firmly on that purpose, what can we not achieve for Him who loveth us and whom we love?

We see what such a spirit can achieve when it enabled Abraham to offer up his only son; and Moses to brave the wrath of Pharaoh; and Elijah to present himself before the cruel Ahab; and Shadrach Meshach and Abednego to refuse to



worship the golden image ; and Daniel to continue kneeling on his knees, giving thanks to God and praying as aforetime. We see what it could do for Peter and John when they declared, " We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard ;" and for Paul when he exclaimed to the brethren, " I am ready, not to be bound only but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus ;" and when at his first answer before Cæsar " no man stood with him but all men forsook him ; *notwithstanding* the Lord stood with him and *strengthened him.*" We see it in the glorious company of the Apostles and the goodly fellowship of the Prophets and the noble army of Martyrs ; in " Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephtha, in David also and Samuel, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, *out of weakness were made strong*, waxed valiant in fight, put to flight the armies of the aliens." *God's strength perfected in human weakness*—this has been the wondrous fact exhibited in every age, in all who have sought the Grace of God in prayer. If we drink in thereby the Spirit of God we cannot but do the things of God ; for that Spirit is quick and active and must work ; that Spirit is holy and must work holily ; that Spirit is mighty and must work mightily. " He that is devout," says Bishop Tay-

lor, "besides that he prays frequently, he delights in it as it is a conversation with God; he rejoices in God, and esteems him the light of his eyes and the support of his confidence, the object of his love and the desire of his heart; the man is uneasy but when he does God service; and his soul is at peace and rest when he does what may be accepted. And therefore, if you can but once obtain delight in prayer, and to long for the time of communion, and to be pleased with holy meditation, and to desire God's grace with great passion; if you can delight in God's love, and consider concerning his providence, and busy yourselves in the pursuit of the affairs of his kingdom, then you have the grace of devotion and *your evil nature shall be cured.*"

Thus then we have seen the benefit of Prayer, in the widest meaning of the term, as the means of exercising all the powers of the soul and thereby nourishing the Spiritual Life; as enabling the Mind to realize and enjoy the presence of God, the Heart to depend on him in every change, and the Will to coincide and co-operate with his. Prayer imbues our own thoughts with the thought of God. It delivers us from all anxiety about the absence of a seeming good or the presence of a seeming evil. It gives us courage to bear the want of what our Father withholds from us and the pressure of what our Father puts upon us. It raises

us above the fluctuations of human fear and human hope. It subdues our will into conformity with God's will. It developes in us powers that are divine. It strengthens us to act on every occasion as becometh those on whom the eye of God is fixed, and to whom the honour of the highest is entrusted. To think of God as the Creator amidst all our awe of the universe, to confide in him as the Sovereign Ruler amidst all the changes of the world, to follow him as the only Guide amidst all the allurements of earth ; in prosperity to praise Him, in adversity to trust in Him ; amidst our diligence to glorify him for his help, and in our weakness to believe that he can work in us all the pleasure of his goodness ; this is to live in Prayer, to grow by Prayer, to become transformed by Prayer into our Father's image, till at last we shall be fully like him and shall see him as he is. O Thou Author of all godliness, without whom nothing is strong nothing is holy, work *Thou* this transformation in our hearts ! Use *Thou* this book for the purposes of thy grace ! Quicken, awaken, nourish by it in many a soul the life divine—and thus stablish our hearts unblameable in holiness before Thee our Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints !

THE END.

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